

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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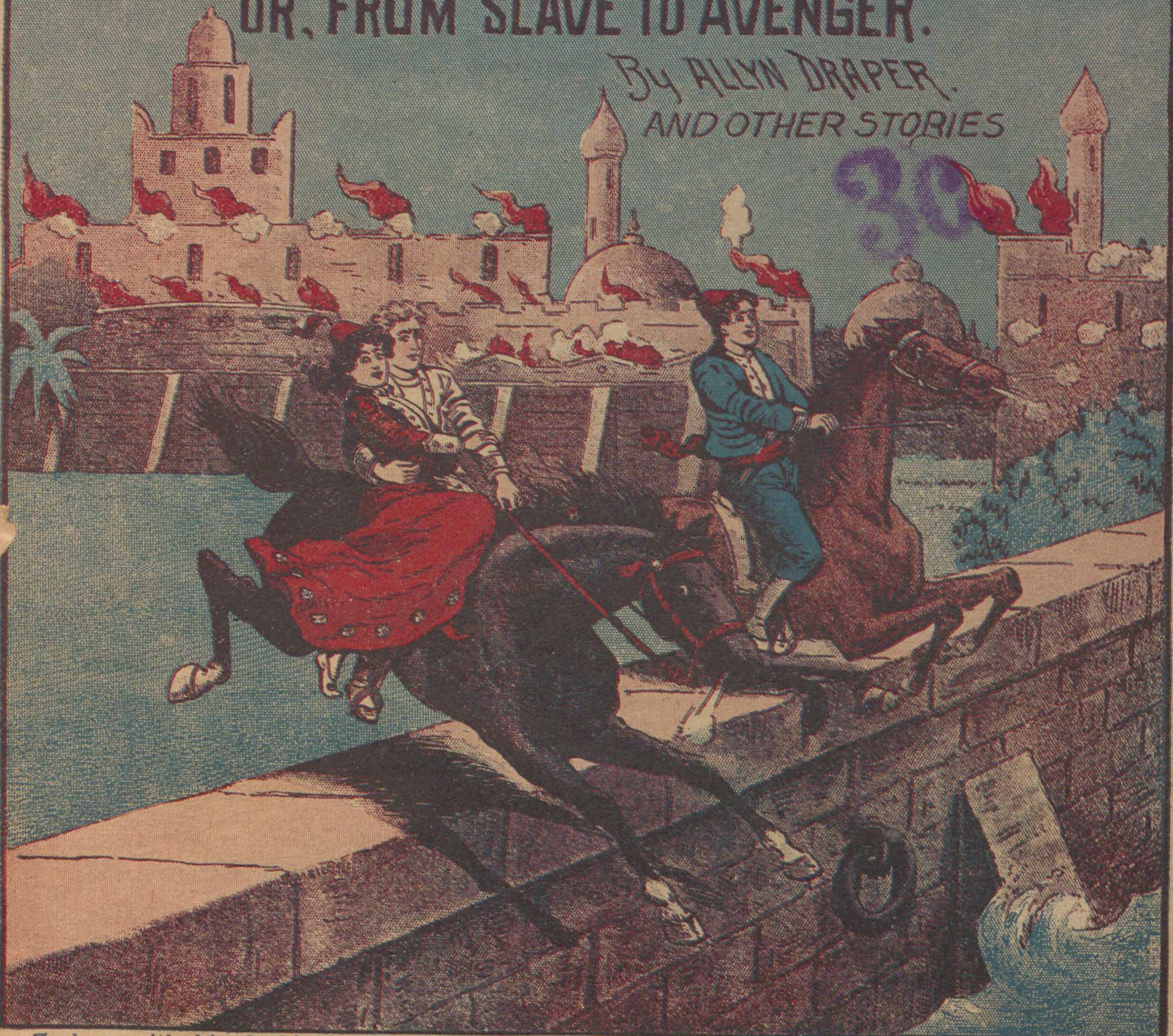
NEW YORK, JULY 25, 1917.

Price SIX Cents.

A MONTE CRISTO AT 18;

OR, FROM SLAVE TO AVENGER.

By ALYN DRAPER.
AND OTHER STORIES



Zephyr, with his double burden, cleared the wall, followed by Will on the other steed. Two splashes, a rattle of musketry, the hoarse cries of the guards, the sonorous voice of the great bell, and then silence.

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A MONTE CRISTO AT 18

OR

FROM SLAVE TO AVENGER

By ALLYN DRAPER

CHAPTER I.

THE HALT IN THE DESERT.

The sun hung like a ball of molten brass above the horizon, the shadows of the tents lengthened themselves upon the motionless ocean of sand, and mists began to slowly arise in the hollows as the long, hot day drew to a close.

Here and there in the entrance of a tent, where the shadows fell, an Arab lay stretched out upon a mat, or sat cross-legged, slowly smoking a long pipe and gazing indolently across the stretches of burning sand, now watching with little interest the men who were feeding the camels, or looking vacantly at the barren wastes stretching far beyond the vision.

The reddish brown of the sand, the clear blue of the sky, the brazen hue of the setting sun, soon to change to blood red, the dull tints of the rude canvas houses of the Nomads, and their white robes and turbans formed a scene full of contrasting color and rich in picturesque effects, the gentle stir of awakening life adding a human interest to the picture.

The sun dropped lower and lower, and as night advanced the life of the little camp in the desert seemed to awaken as though from sleep, and the scene took on a bustling aspect, or as much of a one as the feverish heat of the place, and the apathetic habits of the natives would warrant.

From the tents came white-robed white-turbaned figures, who spoke in sharp accents to the bronzed and half-naked attendants, who quickly busied themselves—some in preparing the evening meal, some in milking, some in harnessing the camels or horses, and others in getting ready to strike the tents.

By day, when the fierce heat of the sun pours relentlessly down upon the burning sands, scorching and blistering whatever its fiery darts rests upon, travel is wholly suspended upon the desert, and it is only at night, when a refreshing coolness, even bitter cold, succeeds the death-dealing heat, that the caravan takes up its march once more, and the journey is continued under the light of the moon and stars.

As the sun, now growing more red and glowing, approached more nearly to the horizon, a handsome young fellow, dressed in European garb, came out of one of the tents, the largest and most imposing of them all, looked about him with an air of interest at the scene of excitement and bustle in the camp, and said to a nearly naked boy of about his own age:

"Getting ready to start again, Murad? I am glad of that."

The Arab boy, understanding the tone and gestures more than words, smiled pleasantly, and jointed to a fleet-footed, airy-limbed pony, the property of his interrogator, which now, at the sound of the latter's voice, came swiftly toward him.

"Ah, Zephyr, my beauty, so you are as eager to be away as myself, are you?" asked the boy, striking the glossy neck of the beautiful steed, and putting his face close to its velvety nose.

The intelligent creature whinnied softly, and the boy continued:

"Only a few days more on the desert, my beauty, and I shall take you to a pleasanter country, where you can have your fill of the tender grass, where you can drink all the water you want, and where you and I can scamper for miles over the beautiful plains, see the great mountains and the broad rivers, and everything else that is good, in place of this cruel, never-ending desert."

A man standing in the entrance of the tent which the boy had left smiled cruelly as he heard these joyful words, and muttered beneath his breath:

"Not so soon as you think, my lad, not so soon as you think."

Low as the tone was, the boy caught the sound, turned, and said eagerly:

"What did you say, Uncle Crafton?"

"I said that I hoped it would be as soon as that," answered the man, turning away that the boy might not see the evil look upon his face.

"Oh, it won't be so long," cried the boy. "We shall soon be across this stretch of desert and in a fertile country once more. I have had quite enough of it, and shall be glad when we are out of Africa."

"Yes, and so will I," thought the man. "Out of Africa and into your grave, my lad."

He composed his countenance, gave a few words of instruction to the Arab who led the caravan, turned to the boy, and said:

"But you wanted to visit Egypt, Fred, see the pyramids and the Sphinx, sail on the Nile and buy trinkets at the queer old bazaars in the crooked streets of Cairo."

"Yes, I shall do all that, of course," said the boy, his eyes brightening, "but when that is done I shall be glad to be out of Africa, and return to Europe and then home."

"Oh, there will be time enough to think of that, Fred," returned the other. "Your education must be extended, you must have the polish which foreign travel will give you, so that you can fill the place which your wealth will naturally exalt you. A millionaire must travel, see the world, and be prepared to shine in the best society, Fred."

"Yes, I know that, Uncle Crafton," returned the youth; "but it will be a long time yet before I am of age, and I should not like to spend all that time away from home. I can come again, you know, after I have left college."

"I think I shall have you educated abroad, Fred," said the uncle. "The son of Godfrey Haydon must take his place with the best, and the resources of the world are at your feet. With your money you can command everything, and you ought to have it."

"All the same I shall be satisfied to go scampering through the fields on Zephyr's back, and let the rest go for a while," laughed the boy, as he vaulted lightly upon the pony's back and laughed gaily.

"You had better let them saddle the wild creature for you," muttered the other, as he turned away. "We shall start as soon as the evening meal is eaten."

Then he entered the tent, gazed for an instant at the boy, and muttered:

"Out of Africa, eh, my rich young nephew? Not while you live, my lad, not while you live! Do you think that I can see you enjoying all that vast fortune which your father accumulated, when by one adroit stroke I can seize it? You alone stand between me and millions, and do you think that I will let you stand there, when by one quick sweep I can remove you?"

A low, cruel laugh was the only reply to this question, and so might the arch fiend have laughed at the wail of some lost soul.

"Let you enjoy all that wealth and merely draw my pay as a steward while seeing it increase for another's use?" continued the man, with an evil look. "No, no! I can make it all mine, my boy, and I will; and while your bones are whitening on the great desert I shall be enjoying myself as only a millionaire can enjoy himself, and with no more regret for you, my dear nephew, than the vulture feels for the dead man upon whom he feeds."

The sun was now nearly at the horizon, and as Fred cantered a few yards out upon the desert, the Arab boy Murad called him to come to his supper so that the pony could be saddled.

The animal understood better than the boy, and trotted back to the camp with his young rider, standing still when he reached the tent.

"Well, if I could travel all over the world on your back, my pet," said Fred, as he lightly sprang to the ground, "that is what I should like, and I would not care how long the journey lasted."

The meal over, the sun being now down, preparations were made for the start, the tents being struck, the camels laden, and the horses saddled, and, as the full moon arose above the level of this sea of sand the camels, casting long shadows behind them, took up the line of march, to the accompaniment of the wild songs of their Arab riders, mingled with the jingle of spurs, the shouts of the dragomans, the laughter of the young men and the distant cry of some desert bird or the long-drawn howl of some beast of prey lurking in the shadow of some great rock or cluster of palms, awaiting the approach of a victim.

Seated on his beloved pony, Fred Haydon, now well protected from the chill of the night, as severe as the heat of the day, rode just behind his uncle, who talked in Arabic with the leader of the party.

"I'd like to know what they are talking about," mused Fred carelessly, and then thinking of other things he fell into a half doze, while his pony ambled gently on.

"You say that they will meet us on the morrow?" asked Crafton Haydon, Fred's uncle, of his companion.

"Yes, they are sure to do so. We do not want to go further into the desert, and I told Yussuf where to await us."

"Good!" muttered Crafton. "I am glad the journey is so nearly over. Yussuf will do as you bid him?"

"For gold? Aye, that he will, and the little Sahib will no longer cast his shadow over your path."

"Yes, to the desert with him!" hissed Crafton. "And so long as he never troubles me I care not whether he lives or dies."

Through the night the caravan continued upon the march, but as the glow in the east proclaimed the dawn, there being no warning half light, so pleasant to see in higher latitudes, here on the Equator, the leader sounded a halt, and the camels were quickly unladen, the tents erected, and preparations begun for passing the day in quiet.

"This will be our last day here, won't it, Uncle Crafton?" asked Fred, as they sat at breakfast, attended by three or four white-robed, silently moving Arabs.

"Yes," said the other shortly, "it will be your last!"

The sun had arisen, and although as yet the heat was not overbearing, it was still oppressive enough to induce sleep, and Fred, attired in loose white garments, was dozing upon a rich divan in his tent, when he suddenly awoke to find himself lifted up, his lower limbs covered by a coarse sack, which two fierce-looking Arabs were about to draw over his head.

"Let me go, you villains!" he cried, striking out right and left in a vain attempt to free himself. "Uncle, Uncle, what does this mean!"

Crafton Haydon, to whom the boy now appealed, as he suddenly appeared at the entrance of the tent, with a look of triumphant hate upon his face, pointed out upon the desert where the sun hung like a ball of fire in the burning, cloudless sky, and hissed:

"To the desert with him! Let his bones whiten on the

sands; let the hyenas feast upon his flesh; let the vultures pick out his eyes; anything, so that I never see him again!"

"Oh, my God!" groaned the boy, as the awful truth burst upon him.

"Away with him!" fairly thundered the treacherous guardian. "Where now are your millions, Fred Haydon? Mine, all mine!"

"Betrayed!" gasped the helpless lad, and then he lost all consciousness and became but as a helpless infant in the hands of his cruel captors.

Fred was taken by his captors and sold to a party of Arabs, who were dealers in slaves. There was another captive, an American boy by the name of Will Wright, with this party, and he and Fred stuck together, making their minds up to escape at the first opportunity.

CHAPTER II.

THE ATTACK ON THE CARAVAN.

Down from the mountains came a horde of wild riders, their lances waving in the air, their long guns brandished above their heads, their fierce shouts ringing out clear and shrill, answered by the neighing of their horses, as untamed as the riders themselves.

On dashed the riders, ten score of them, led by a swarthy chieftain, whose glittering accoutrements, shining spear and shining sword proclaimed him to be a man of great rank among his fierce companions.

On they swept with shout and yell, now in a long line like a serpent, now in a compact body, and again in the form of a crescent, the points in advance, the chief riding midway between.

These men were Berbers, or Tuaricks, one of the wildest fiercest of the North Africa tribes, robbers by profession and murderers in heart, more to be dreaded than the terrible lion of the desert or the blood-drinking vultures of the mountains.

On they went, drawing nearer and nearer to the caravan of Yussuf the Fez, their banners waving in the wind, the dust rising in clouds before them, their shouts now rising and swelling into a terrible din whose rumbling sounded like thunder or the first rush of the awful sirocco.

More to be dreaded than these were these men, and Yussuf gathered all his warriors in a body at the approach of the Berbers, whose errand could only be one of menace to the caravan.

Yussuf was but one or two day's journey from Mourzouk, and until now he had passed the confines of the country of the Tuaricks without molestation.

His entire band numbered but five score, and among these were many woman and boys, who could not be depended upon to bear arms, and who were now nearly useless.

The Berbers were fully two hundred in number, and all fierce warriors, many of them having been in more fights than they counted years, and accustomed from childhood to scenes of strife and bloodshed.

Yussuf realized that he was, indeed, in a terrible strait, and he resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible, knowing that the maxim of his enemies was to slay and spare not.

Forming his men into a square, with the women and pack camels in the center, he placed himself at the head and awaited the attack.

As soon as the character of the advancing host was known, Will said to Fred, in low, earnest tones:

"These men are of the Tuarick tribe, the fiercest men of the country. Yussuf has fought with them before, and, if I mistaken not, with this very chief. Upon the issue of this battle depends our lives as well as those of Yussuf and his band. We must fight now as fiercely as though we were very Bedouins."

"Tell Yussuf that we are in his service," answered Fred.

The young American went at once to the leader of the caravan, and, being fluent in Arabic, said:

"We are thy slaves, O Yussuf, and are not fit to lie at the door of thy tent, but we will fight for thee, if thou wilt, and help thee drive the hated Berber back to his miserable den in the mountains."

"It is well said, Sahib," answered the Arab. "I have need of all the strong arms and firm wills that Allah will give me to-day. Take thy place, Sahib, thou and thy young brother, in the ranks of my warriors, and if to-day's battle favors us thou shalt no longer be slaves, but free men."

Armed with a sword and shield, and mounted on his own beloved pony, which now, in the confusion of approaching

battle came to him at his call, Fred took his place in the front with Will at his side.

On came the Berbers like a storm cloud, and many a stout heart quailed as the deafening war cry arose as the foe swept like a mighty wind upon the doomed caravan.

Steel clashed steel, shot echoed shot, cry answered cry, yell followed yell, and the battle raged with fury as the opposing hosts met.

Like a young war god looked the American boy as he withstood attack after attack, parrying a blow here, and unhorsing an enemy there, and anon shouting defiance in his clear ringing voice.

Not Yussuf himself, nor any of his battle-scarred companions, fought with more determination, and even the terrible Berbers were forced to admire the lad's unflinching courage.

His lithe limbs, his clear skin, his fair hair and his youth all made him a figure to be noticed, and his bravery enhanced all his other qualities and made him appear more like some warlike spirit from another world than a creature of flesh and blood.

His sword was splintered to pieces on the helmet of a Berber warrior, and his shield was torn from his grasp, but seizing the long spear from the very hand of an advancing foe he turned it against his enemies, and came out unscathed.

Not long could the issue of the fight be delayed, however, for the Berbers outnumbered their foes, and they had begun the struggle with the settled determination of coming off conquerors.

One after another of his choicest men fell, and Yussuf was at last left with but a score of men, including the two Americans.

As yet Fred had received no hurt, and scarcely seemed to feel fatigue, while all the rest were bleeding from many wounds, and seemed well nigh exhausted.

Gathering the flower of his band about him, the Taurick chieftain now hurled himself upon the remnant of Yussuf's force, determined to bring the conflict to a close.

Hand-to-hand fought the two leaders, while the others on both sides closed in a deadly struggle.

A huge mountain man, twice his size, rushed at Fred as though to bear him to the ground, but Zephyr swerved to one side, and as the Berber dashed by, Fred, by a dexterous stroke, dismounted him and brought him heavily to the earth.

At that moment Yussuf's sword broke, and the Berber chief closed upon him, thrusting his keen blade straight at the Arab's throat.

Fred uttered a fierce cry, poised his lance, rushed straight at the Berber and dashed his weapon from his grasp.

Will was at the boy's side in an instant, and as seven or eight mountaineers surrounded the two Yussuf fell from his saddle pierced by a javelin hurled by one of the Berbers.

Then arose a terrible cry, and Yussuf's men turned and fled, leaving Fred and Will in the midst of their enemies.

Suddenly the voice of the leader rang out above the noise of the conflict, the circle opened, and the Berber chief rode straight at the daring boy.

He had a heavy club in his hand, and it was clearly his intention to brain the hapless youth, when, without a warning, a young girl dashed in front of the chief, seized his bridle rein, and cried:

"Hold! Take the Sahib's life at your peril! He is Allah's messenger! Harm him if you dare!"

"The Star of the Sahara!" whispered Will. "She is Yussuf's slave!"

Fred had not before seen the girl, and he started in surprise as he looked upon her.

She wore a scant, clinging garment of white cloth, which revealed every motion of her lithe body, her arms were bare and were adorned with bands of gold; her snowy throat was exposed, encircled by a necklace of jewels, while her hair, escaping from a veil or hood of coarse cloth, was seen to be studded here and there with gems, peeping out from the wavy, golden braids as the beautiful creature moved her head.

The Berber chief let his weapon fall to the ground, and all his band remained like statues as he said slowly:

"Let not a hair on the heads of the white Sahibs be touched. Allah has sent them to be our defenders. Never before have I seen such fearless fighters. They shall lead our tribe and no one shall stand against us henceforth."

Then to the maiden, who still held his bridle, he said:

"Who and what are you, woman, that dares to command Ali Ben Mezroum, the whirlwind of the desert?"

"I am the Star of the Sahara," returned the girl, "and whence I come no one knows."

"You shall be the chief of wives," said Ali Ben Mezroum, "and whatever you desire shall be granted thee."

"Then spare the lives of these two young men," said the girl.

"I have said it," replied Ali. "Thou and they shall go with me to the hills. To our mountains. Berbers," he added, turning to his men, "bind the prisoners, kill the wounded, take whatever is of value, and let us be off before the night falls."

"Who is this woman?" asked Fred, as he still sat motionless on his pony, of Will Wright at his side, the robbers hastening to obey the commands of their chief.

"She is called the Star of the Sahara, that is all I know. I have seldom seen her, though she has been with Yussuf as long as I have."

"Is she Arabian?"

"I cannot say. At any rate she has saved our lives for the present, and we should be grateful, for I fear that——"

"You fear what?" asked Fred.

"That we have not bettered our condition, and that we have escaped from one master to fall into the hands of another ten times more cruel and exacting."

CHAPTER III.

A DASH FOR FREEDOM.

"Ha! You dogs, bestir yourselves or feel the lash! You do not earn the food that you eat. You are idle beasts, fit only for the vultures and the hyena to quarrel over."

A heavily built, villainous-looking Arab, bronzed and bearded, with a long gun over his shoulder, a brace of huge pistols in his belt, and a whip in his hand, was urging a number of men loaded with chains and carrying heavy burdens up a long flight of stone steps, and then, having reached the top and thrown down their bundles they were forced to hurry to the bottom to procure more loads.

A caravan had been plundered, and the slaves of the robber chief, Ali Ben Merzoum, were carrying bales of rich goods to the storehouse, one of the buildings which formed the chief's fortress in the mountains of northern Tripoli.

At times they were laborers engaged in strengthening the fortress, then carriers, and on occasion soldiers, if the stronghold was attacked, but at all times they were slaves and lived the most wretched lives.

Clothed in rags, half-fed, beaten and overworked, it would not have been strange if they had longed for or even sought death as a release from their sufferings, but there were at least two in the band who cherished the hope of one day escaping and making their way to their far distant home beyond the sea.

"Now, then, you idle dog!" cried Ganem, the overseer of the slaves, as one of the men threw down his load, "to the bottom with you, and see that you bring a heavier burden, or you will feel this."

Even as he spoke, the swarthy tyrant struck the young man a blow with the whip and laughed, in expectation of seeing his victim writhe in pain.

The victim, scarcely more than a boy in stature, suddenly gathered up the chains which secured his wrists, sprang at the overseer, and struck him a blow upon the head which felled him to the ground.

Then seizing one of the pistols from the man's broad sash he quickly retreated to the storehouse, as a cry of alarm was raised by the slaves who had witnessed the assault.

In an instant half a dozen soldiers came dashing up the steps, while the slaves stood huddled together in a body at the top.

Other men came out of the storehouse, and from an adjacent building, which seemed to be a private residence, came a man of importance apparently, for he was magnificently dressed, and was saluted by the guards as he approached.

By this time Ganem had recovered sufficiently to raise himself upon one elbow and glare fiercely around him.

"Let the dog of a slave be flayed alive!" he hissed. "Back to your work, all of you," and he made a motion as if to

draw his pistol, but fell back with a cry of pain, while the blood gushed afresh from the wound in his head.

The soldiers rushed upon the slaves and drove them down the steps with their lances, more than one of the poor wretches receiving a sharp thrust.

"Shoot down the dogs!" cried Ali, who had now come up. "What matters the life of one slave, more or less? We can easily fill his place."

Ganem now arose to a sitting posture, and said:

"Where is the dog that struck me? It is the Christian cur, the young American. Where is his friend, the slave of Yussuf?"

"Ah! It was he?" cried Ali. "The brave fighter, he who braved my very self at the fight in the oasis! Let him be found at once, but do not kill him!"

"Not kill him?" hissed Ganem. "Not kill him when he has struck a follower of our holy prophet? I shall never look honest men in the face if the insult is not wiped out in the dog's blood."

"No," said Ali, "he shall not be killed, but he shall live such a life that he shall wish for death a thousand times a day. Let him be found and loaded with chains, let him be given all the degrading work, let him be tortured once a day, let him be spat upon and spurned by the lowest of the slaves, that every moment of his life shall be passed in agony both of mind and body."

"The dog has taken shelter in the storehouse, great chief," said the captain of the guards, approaching and bowing low to the robber chief.

"Bring him to me!" cried Ali. "Take ten, twenty, a hundred soldiers, but bring him forth."

The soldiers hurried to the storehouse, the slaves were driven to a cluster of miserable hovels at the further end of the town, and Ali Ben Merzoum returned to his house, leaving the overseer sitting upon a great hewn stone, part of a ruined temple, gazing moodily in the direction taken by the soldiers.

"Let him but appear," he muttered, "and we shall see if he escapes me! I will crush him like a venomous reptile under my heel!"

Meanwhile, the soldiers were searching the storehouse, for the fugitive, hurrying hither and thither, turning over bales, throwing down obstructions which lay in their path, and gradually narrowing the area in which they worked, like a circle of hunters closing in upon the prey which had sought a shelter in the bush.

"We must find him!" cried the captain. "Yonder corner, where the bales are piled the highest, affords him shelter. Direct all your energies upon that spot."

The men advanced in a body, throwing down bale after bale, and now climbing upon those that were left, approaching step by step the place where Fred Haydon lay concealed behind an immense pile of bales right in the angle formed by two walls of the stone storehouse.

The worm had turned at last, and the boy who had so long suffered in silence all the hardships, all the tasks, all the insults that his brutal captors heaped upon him, had now taken the law into his own hands, and had resolved to die rather than submit to further indignities.

From where he lay, crouched behind a bale, Fred could see the men approaching, while they could not see him, being in the light, while he was in the dark.

He had the pistol stolen from Ganem in his possession, but he did not intend to use it until it became absolutely necessary, as a shot would betray his hiding place, and bring the enemy down upon him in overwhelming numbers.

Step by step they advanced, until he was hemmed in on all three sides, and there only remained the solid wall behind him to which to retreat.

"On, on!" shouted the captain. "We must find him now!"

Finding that he must do something now to at least alarm his pursuers, and perhaps enable himself to change his quarters in the confusion, Fred suddenly leaped to his feet, uttered a yell of defiance, and fired point blank at the nearest of his enemies.

At the same time he threw his weight upon the bale behind which he had been hiding, and hurled it down upon the advancing soldiers.

Another bale, dislodged by this movement, went rolling down, and Fred suddenly felt a breath of air upon his cheek.

A cry of alarm from the soldiers was followed by a sudden movement in their midst which shook the pile of bales so

fiercely that more of them rolled from their places, and then, all at once, Fred found himself falling.

The dislodged bales had uncovered an opening in the pile which extended to the floor of the storehouse, and it was down this that the fugitive now dropped.

Fortunately, although he did not know it then, a pile of bales behind him, and close to the wall, had fallen over this opening immediately after his descent, and there was now nothing to show whither he had gone.

The space into which he had fallen was about a yard square at the top, but narrowed down to just room enough for him to stand where he now was, but from somewhere in the wall there came a current of pure air, and he was thus enabled to breathe without difficulty, and he was safe from his enemies for the moment at all events.

There was scarcely any light where he was, but that was in his favor, for his pursuers could not see him, even if they happened to find the opening of the hole down which he had fallen.

For a short time he heard the voices of the searchers, now loud, and then fainter, until at last they died out, and the only sound he heard was the clash of the heavy door of the storehouse as it closed and the grating of the ponderous key in the lock.

"Thank heaven for that," he murmured. "I am safe for the present, and now to hit upon a plan of action by which I may get away from here, find Will, and leave this place forever."

CHAPTER IV.

TWO POWERFUL ALLIES.

Night came, and Fred, in his narrow hiding place, hearing no sound, ascended step by step to the top of the opening, which he found had been closed by the falling bales.

He managed to push one of these aside, and it rolled down to the floor below over those lower than itself, but as there was no other sound Fred knew that there was no one in the place, and that he was still safe.

Groping around, he struck his foot against something and reaching down he found that the object was a dagger, dropped by one of the soldiers during the confusion consequent upon the firing of that one shot.

"That is good," he mused. "I can now fight to better advantage if it comes to close quarters, and perhaps, too, I can make another use of it."

No sounds came to him from the town without, and he was about to descend to his lair and go to sleep, when a loud hissing sound was heard from near the great doors of the building.

"St—st!" it sounded like a warning, though whether to himself or his enemies he could not determine.

He grasped the knife more firmly, and this movement, though slight, caused his chains to clank.

The sound was answered by a similar one, and then a low voice said:

"Sh! Is it you, Fred?"

The words were those of his own tongue, and Fred's heart leaped into his mouth as he recognized the voice of his friend and fellow slave, Will Wright.

For a month or two past they had not seen anything of each other, intercourse being denied them by Ganem, who had discovered their friendship quite by accident.

Fred would have been glad to see Will, and to speak to him at any time, but now, hunted and in hiding from his cruel persecutors, the sound of his friend's voice was to him like the sound of babbling waters to the worn-out desert traveler.

"Yes—yes, it is I!" he whispered. "Where are you—how did you get here—have the Berbers given up the search?"

"Sh! Not so loud, nor so many questions," laughed Will. "Speak low, but not in whispers. Where are you?"

"In an angle of the wall near the top. How did you get in here?"

"I was here when you entered, after striking down that villain. It was the work of an instant only to conceal myself, for every one ran out upon the instant of the alarm being given."

Will now joined Fred, and they sat on the scattered bales conversing in low tones, neither seeing the other, but both feeling happier for being united.

"We must get rid of our chains," said Fred, "for with them discovery is inevitable, even if we escape from here."

"We must escape at once," returned Will, "even if we take our chains with us. If we could only see Fatima."

"Why, how can she help us?" asked Fred. "She is a captive like ourselves, is she not?"

"Not altogether. In the month that I have been separated from you I have learned much. Fatima is our friend, and will help us to escape. She has long been planning to do so, for she desires freedom as much as we do."

"You have seen her—have spoken to her, then?"

"I have seen her. Of late I have been employed in the gardens adjoining the harem. I have seen Fatima and have communicated with her."

"In what manner?"

"Through little notes concealed in the shrubbery or in the crevices of the pavements, and by signs agreed upon between us."

"And do you believe that she is really our friend?"

"Yes, and you would say so, too, if you knew——"

"If I knew what?" asked Fred, when Will suddenly paused.

"What she will tell you," was the quiet answer; "but I must get away from here," Will suddenly said. "This very night I was to meet her by the gate, when she was to tell me further of her plans."

"If she is in the harem how can she go out at night alone?"

"She is not; she is attached to the favorite, whom she serves by reporting what the others say, and by repeating the news of the outside world. She is thus allowed more liberty and Ali has come to look upon her with favoring eye, and to declare that she shall be one of his wives."

"And she——"

"Would die first. She loves—some one else," answered Will.

"But how are you to leave this place since it is locked? Ah, great heavens! I had forgotten!"

"Forgotten?" gasped Will, taking fire from Fred's excitement.

"The chink in the wall. Perhaps we can loosen one of the stones, they are but thrown together with cement. Come, follow me! Take my hand and make no noise."

"What chink in the wall do you mean?" asked Will.

"I found one in my hiding place. The air enabled me to breathe freely, even in a cramped space. With the dagger I found we may be able to dig away the wall sufficiently to——"

"I shall keep my tryst!" muttered Will. "And this very night we shall leave this place forever!"

Fred then jumped down to the ground, felt along the wall till he found the place where the air came in, and measured the opening with his hand, finding it to be a full span in width on the inside, but narrowing down to about half that much at the distance of a hand's length.

Attacking the cement with his dagger, he presently succeeded in loosening a number of small stones, there being no large ones used in the construction of the storehouse.

"Can I be of any help?" asked Will, from above. "Is there room down there for me?"

"There might be if you took away some of these bales," suggested Fred, as he pulled out a stone as large as his head, thus materially widening the opening.

Will at once began the work of removing the bales, some of them easily yielding to his weight, while others resisted his strength.

"Let me take your place, Fred," he presently suggested. "Oh, these chains! If I could only get them off."

"We will see about breaking them when we get out," said Fred, giving his place to Will, who continued what his friend had begun.

The wall was nearly two feet thick, and as the hole must be as large on the outside as within, the work was not one that could be done in a short time, notwithstanding the necessity of haste.

When Will had been at work ten minutes, Fred, who had been rolling bales against the great door of the storehouse, suddenly came up and said:

"I have just heard them sounding the hour of midnight. When were you to meet Fatima?"

"In another hour."

"How big is the hole?"

"I can get my head in half way."

"Well, I have picked up a lance near the door. We must both work at the hole now."

"That is fortunate," said Will. "Come, we must make a space for both to work in."

This was soon accomplished, and presently the two were engaged in the work of widening the breach.

"Put all the stones inside," said Fred, "and listen for any suspicious sounds. Don't allow anything to fall outside."

In half an hour Fred could thrust his head to within two inches of the outside, and they both redoubled their exertions, the hope of escape renewing their failing strength.

In twenty minutes more Will found that he could put his head and shoulders through the opening, and he whispered excitedly:

"In another hour we shall be free. Wait here for me. I am going to Fatima, but I shall speedily return."

In another moment he was outside, dagger in hand.

There was a rattle of chains, a sudden startled exclamation, and then the outlines of a stalwart figure were seen against the sky.

It was one of the guards appointed to watch the place, and see that no one escaped.

The moment was one fraught with the most vital consequences.

If the alarm was given, if the soldier made but one cry, they were lost.

With the swiftness of a lightning flash, with the ferocity of a wild beast, Will leaped upon the astonished soldier and buried his dagger up to the hilt in the man's throat.

There was a smothered sound, a gasping of the breath, and the man sank to the ground lifeless.

"Here! Take this carrion inside," muttered Will, as, seemingly endowed with new strength, he lifted the body and thrust it into the opening in the wall.

Then hastily assuming the robe, turban and arms of the dead soldier, he boldly made his way toward the palace of Ali Ben Merzoum. His chains impeded him somewhat, naturally, but their clanking did not cause him any uneasiness, as the sound could easily be taken for the rattle of his simitar scabbard upon the ground as he hurried on.

His coming had been anticipated, for, as he began skirting the wall which ran along one side of the house of the Berber chief, a low cough was heard above him.

"Fatima!" he whispered, coming to a pause and looking up. "We must hasten. The escape must be made now, if ever. If daylight finds us here, we are doomed."

"We shall fly to-night," said a soft voice in Arabic, and a ladder of fine, light ropes fell at his feet, and a moment later a figure in black glided to the ground and stood beside him.

CHAPTER V.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

"Where is the young Sahib?" asked Fatima, as she took Will's hand.

"In the storehouse. I will lead you to him. We have dug our way through the wall."

"Good! It would be difficult to approach the place by the front, guarded as it is."

"You knew that he had taken refuge there?"

"Yes; and Ali intends to ferret him out in the morning."

"Then we must hasten."

"Yes; but first you must be freed of your chains. At last I have obtained the keys. Zaleika stole them from that ogre Ganem this evening and gave them to me upon my promise to let her take my place in the harem when I am appointed. She does not know to what use I intend to put them."

The girl swiftly unlocked the chains which bound Will's arms and feet, and then said:

"Come, we have not a moment to loose."

In the obscurity of the night, although the stars were shining, the dark robes of the maiden prevented her from being observed, and as she glided close to Will's side, he alone in his white burnous was visible, had any one seen them.

They soon reached the angle of the storehouse wall, and hastily slipping the keys into Will's hand the girl bade him make haste and to await her signal.

Then, as Will crept through the opening, she hurried away and was at once lost to sight.

"All goes well," whispered Will, as he entered. "Here, hold out your arms, and I will unlock your chains."

In a short time Fred's chains fell from him and clashed upon the stone floor at his feet.

"For every day that I have worn those hated manacles shall one week of agony be added to the life of my enemy," he muttered, "and for every pang I have suffered shall he suffer seven."

"Sh! Let us go outside," whispered Will. "In the shadow we shall not be observed, and we can thus more readily escape if an alarm is given."

Suddenly, as they reached the outside and stood in the shadow of the wall, the tramp of a body of men, trained soldiers evidently, was heard, and Will seized his companion's arm and drew him close to the wall.

The tightening of his grip was all the sign he gave that the utmost caution was necessary, but that was enough.

They scarcely dared breathe, as they flattened themselves against the wall, and it seemed as if their hearts had ceased beating, when, a few moments later, a score of men armed to the teeth passed within a foot of them.

"Praise be to Allah, all is well!" they heard the leader of the band call out in a shrill intonation a few minutes later, and Fred drew a long breath, while Will whispered:

"Thank God for that!" and then a bell sounded, and the cries of the sentinels echoed along the line of walls as they repeated the signal.

It seemed an interminable time, but it was not more than a few minutes, when a dark form glided up, almost noiselessly, and a soft voice whispered:

"Come! The guard has gone its rounds, and we are safe for another hour. I have secured two horses, as well as clothing and food, and now let us leave this hated place, never to return."

"Where are the horses?" asked Fred.

"Near the wall where it overlooks the stream."

"How shall we leave the town?"

"The young Howadji is brave, and will dare anything?" asked Fatima eagerly.

"Everything," replied Fred intensely. "Stop! You are going with us?"

"If the Sahib wishes," answered Fatima, with a strange emotion, and Fred suddenly remembered what Will had said, that he would know that the girl was his friend when she told him what she had to tell.

What this was, was as yet only vaguely outlined in his mind, but he felt a strange thrill pass over him as Fatima took his hand and said:

"If you wish it I will follow you to the end of the earth; if you wish it I will remain here to meet death, content in having done what I have."

"I wish you to come with us," said Fred in a voice full of emotion.

In a moment the girl glided out from the wall, leading Fred by the hand, and Will closely following.

Straight as an arrow in its flight was her course, and in ten minutes she paused under the shadow of a low wall and uttered a cry.

The soft whinny of a hoarse was then heard, and in a moment Fred felt a velvety nose pressed against his face.

"Zephyr, my own!" he cried in rapture, and the beautiful steed at his side licked his face.

"I thought the Sahib would want his own steed," said the girl.

At that moment a dark figure suddenly appeared on the wall, outlined against the sky, and a hoarse challenge was heard.

It was one of the sentinels, who hearing the sound of voices, had suddenly approached unsuspected, and now demanded to know who was there.

"The captain of the guard!" said Fred, in a deep tone, realizing his danger in a moment.

"Ha! We shall see," muttered the man, in guttural tones, and then in an instant he rang the stock of his long gun upon the stone at his feet, and cried:

"Awake! Awake! An escape! Awake! Allah il Allah!"

In an instant loud voices were heard in every direction, lights were seen flashing from point to point, and now torches appeared, the while a deep-mouthed bell rang out an alarm from the central tower of the fort.

"The river is just below; it is our only chance!" hissed Fred. "Better death there than life here! Come!"

He sprang into the saddle, caught Fatima by the waist and lifted her to a place beside him, and then turning his pony's

head toward the low wall which now loomed up plainly before them in the beacon fires flashing from the watch towers urged him straight at it.

With a snort the brave animal rushed forward, rose to the leap with the lightness of a deer, and cleared the wall at a bound.

The wall itself was not high at this point, and upon the other side it hung precipitately above a swift stream, which rising in the mountains hurried onward to join the sea.

Scarcely had Zephyr, with his double burden, cleared the wall, than Will, leaping upon the other steed, followed the lead of his friend.

Two splashes, sounding like one, a rattle of musketry, the hoarse cries of the guards, the sonorous voice of the great bell, the murmur of the stream, and then silence.

* * * * *

In the distance could be heard the faint hum of some unusual bustle in the town of the robber captain, Ali Ben Merzoum, but the three riders who pursued their way along the river bank by the light of the rising moon paid little attention to it.

"A hundred years have passed since I made that leap," said one. "What happened then I have forgotten. I only know that I am alive—that I am free—that from this hour begins my work of vengeance."

"You are brave, you fear nothing," said Fatima. "Ali Ben Merzoum is but a worm in your path. With one move you may crush him, but the Sahib is a man to be feared."

"A man!" murmured Fred sadly. "I am not yet eighteen."

"Heavens!" cried Will suddenly, as the moonlight fell full upon the boy's head and face. "Not eighteen! Why, you are like a man of sixty."

A low cry escaped Fatima's lips, as she gazed at her companion.

"Ah! The snows of the mountains have fallen upon him, talons of the vulture have clutched him, and in a moment he had grown old. Oh, my love, my life, what have you done to merit this?"

Fred Haydon was, indeed, no longer a boy in appearance.

Hardship and heartsickness had already altered his looks, but a greater change than these could make had taken place within an hour.

Although his face was beardless, his hair was white, the lines about his mouth were hard and stern, his eyes, deep sunken, burned like two fires from out a cave, and on his forehead were furrows which might have taken years to make, but which had come in an hour.

Man in looks, boy in years he was, and his two companions looked upon the change with ineffable sadness.

"Do I, then, look so old?" he asked, addressing Fatima. "Well, as I said, it is one hundred years since I took that leap. Why, then, should I not look old?"

"If you are old," said the girl, "then so am I old. If a cycle has passed over your head, it has also passed over mine. One thing alone has not changed. Shall I tell you what it is?"

"Your eyes would have told me, had I not already guessed it," said Fred, as he clasped the brave, unselfish girl to his heart in a long, passionate embrace.

CHAPTER VI.

A DREAM OF WEALTH.

Under the stars and the moonlight, followed by storm-cloud and sunshine, traversing barren wastes and fertile champagnes, swimming rivers and crossing mountains, the three fugitives steadily journeyed on toward the coast.

Nothing could exceed the devotion which Fatima showed to Fred, and her first care seemed to be for his comfort.

She seemed to be a true child of the desert, and could endure no end of hardship, but she was ready to endure more than that Fred might not suffer.

"You must not deprive yourself of what little comfort we can get in order that I shall want nothing," he said one day.

"If you need it, that is enough," said Fatima.

"But why do you deprive yourself when I get along without this sacrifice?"

"Because I love you," said the girl proudly, "and love knows not reason."

"Then if you love me you will do as I wish?" asked Fred.

"Your wish shall be my command, my lord."

"Then spare yourself all the fatigue possible, and do not suffer want that I may be satisfied. This is my wish, not my command."

Fatima said no more, but whenever she could shield Fred from the heat or the cold, from hunger or thirst, or from fatigue, she did it, no matter if she herself suffered, and he could prevent it.

If their road went near an oasis, she first saw it, if there was a river which would carry them onward, her eyes first beheld it shimmering in the distance, if there were passes to save their steps, it was she who soonest found them out, and thus at every point she aided them, simply because all these things soothed the journey for the one she loved.

They shot some game, and ate grains, fruit, wild berries, or whatever else came their way, but never would Fatima taste a morsel till Fred had first been satisfied.

They passed in safety through the country of the Berbers, only traveling at night, and finally, after many weary weeks, reached the borders of Tunis, where the people were less savage, but quite as much to be dreaded.

Reaching now a land of comparative plenty, their privations were greatly lessened, though there were other dangers besides those dying from hunger or thirst against which they had to be constantly on the watch.

Fred and Will were Franks, that is to say, they were not Mohammedans, and they were therefore subject to insult, perhaps in danger of death, or at least they might be seized and made slaves of at any moment, and Fatima was a young and beautiful woman, and being such was at the mercy of any powerful sheik or ruler who might chance to see or hear of her.

They were sitting one night, the three fugitives, around a fire built in an old ruin, the last relic of some ancient heathen temple, when Fatima said:

"Tell me, my lord, what are your dreams for the days when you leave this land and go beyond the great sea which you have told me of?"

"To punish those who have made me suffer, who have caused me to be old before my day, who have stolen my inheritance. I live for vengeance."

"Your enemy is powerful; he is a mighty chief; he has men to do his will; you have none."

"The means will come," said Fred, musingly.

"Listen, my lord," said Fatima. "I know little of these things, but I have heard something and perhaps it will be of service. Are there not stones, white, like dewdrops, which when the sun falls upon them give forth rays like the setting sun, or of fire deep within the darkness of a cavern?"

"There are such stones, and men call them diamonds. They are precious, and men barter body and soul to possess them."

"And if you had many such you could buy the services of men to aid you; you could be as powerful as your enemy, the man who has caused the snows of age to fall above the brow of youth?"

"Yes," said Fred simply, while Will showed more eagerness.

"Is it possible that she has secreted the jewels of some of the wives of Merzoum?" asked he, in English. "She must have known that they were valuable."

"My friend wonders if you have some of those sparkling stones," said Fred, in answer to Fatima's look of inquiry.

They had not yet taught her their own language, and they always spoke in Arabic.

"I have none," said Fatima. "I used to see them, but I did not value them."

The glad look faded from Will's face, but Fred's remained as impassive as before.

"One day," continued Fatima, "I heard Merzoum speak of a large store of these stones which a merchant had left upon an oasis in the great sea of water which lies before us."

"An island," said Fred, as Will smiled. "The merchant left a store of diamonds on an island?"

"Yes. He had come across the blue water you tell me lies between the land of the Arab and the land of the Frank, and on the way the storm gods arose in their wrath, and his ship was broken to pieces, and but for the island would have been swallowed up by the waters."

"Go on," said Fred, while Will looked interested once more.

"He saved his store of precious stones, and hid them in the sand, for there were evil men with him who would have

taken them; but he marked the spot and drew with his hand on a sheet of parchment certain signs which one having knowledge might read."

"And this parchment?" asked Will eagerly.

"The sun came and went," continued Fatima, "and a moon passed before there came a ship to the island and took away the men who had been cast upon it. They were evil men, and they made the merchant and all his comrades slaves, and bore them away to Morocco, and one day it chanced that Merzoum bought the merchant to sell him again."

"And the diamonds?" asked Will, while Fred still remained impassive.

"The sparkling stones still hid their fire under the sands of the island, but the merchant preserved the writing, and offered it to Merzoum for his freedom."

"The lying dog gave his promise that the merchant should be free, and took the writing, but on the day that followed the merchant died very strangely. None knew but I, and I was helpless. The man was poisoned."

"Then, hating Merzoum for the sin he had done, I stole the parchment while he slept, and the knowledge he sought to gain by base means was gone from him forever."

"This is the parchment, my lord, for I have kept it, and if it can tell you where to find the store of diamonds, and if they will bring you power and means to prevail against your enemy, happy will Fatima be that she has done this for you."

Then, from a sandal wood box, hidden in the folds of her dress, Fatima drew a small roll of this parchment and gave it into Fred's hands.

Holding it so that the firelight shone full upon it, the young avenger unrolled the scroll, which was but a span in length and half that in width, and attentively examined the characters traced upon it in some dark pigment.

There were lines, crossing and re-crossing, and what appeared to be the irregular outline of an island, although it was not complete.

Below this there was something written in Arabic, and after poring over it for a long time, the while not a word being spoken, Fred suddenly said impressively:

"The island and the hiding place of the diamonds are described here. I cannot doubt the truth of this, for the merchant has here made the sign of the cross and swears that he has written truly. The diamonds are there, and we have got to get them. Friends, the day of my triumph draws nearer."

CHAPTER VII.

BOUND FOR THE ISLAND OF TREASURE.

The fire had nearly died out, not a sound could be heard, and Fred was fast asleep, when a hand was laid upon his forehead, and one word was whispered in his ears:

"Awake!"

Then, as he suddenly started up, a soft hand was laid over his mouth, and Fatima's voice whispered:

"Sh! Be cautious. Wait here till I awake the Sahib. Make no sound—there is danger abroad."

Then the girl glided away in the darkness, and presently returned with Will at her side.

"A band of wandering Arabs approaches," whispered Fatima. "They once worshiped here, and once a year they come to perform their rites, although the temple is in ruins. If you are seen here it means death. Come!"

Taking Fred's hand within her own the girl rapidly led the way out of the ruined temple and toward an open space in the forest.

Suddenly, as they left the place, a dark form sprang up in front of them, uttering a wild cry, which was instantly repeated in several directions.

A sharp report suddenly rang out, preceded by a flash, and then Fatima pressed forward, literally dragging Fred after her.

Another cry was heard, and then a shout from Will, and another report.

In a moment he had joined them, gasping out:

"I finished one of them, but it was my last shot, and now they will be down upon us like a whirlwind."

"Forward!" hissed Fatima, not understanding Will, who, in his excitement, spoke in his own tongue. "Forward, my lord, forward, Sahib."

Reaching the open space Fatima paused, listened, and then said:

"They will not follow. The deadly thunder sticks have terrified them, and they have fled. It was fortunate that you still possessed them. I had forgotten."

"And we are safe?" asked Fred.

"Yes; and we can rest here without fear."

They did not rebuild the fire, but sat upon the ground until the first glow of the new day appeared in the east, when they returned to the temple.

Here they found the bodies of two of the nomads, the place being utterly deserted, as Fatima had said.

The garments of the young men being in a most dilapidated condition, they assumed those of the dead men, burying the bodies in the ruin and covering them with stones.

On the ground near the entrance of the temple they found a leather wallet containing some silver and one gold piece, and this, the first money he had seen in three years, Fred kept, knowing the necessity of it at a later stage in their journey.

They now pushed on, and habited as they were they could travel by day with perfect safety, and thus make more rapid progress.

At last, after many days, they came in sight of the sea, and Will's hopes began to strengthen once more.

Their money was still intact, for they had begged food and shelter on the way, but now they would need it.

They had reached a small town on the Mediterranean, and here it was Fred's intention to seek a ship sailing to some European port, or, if necessary, to continue to Tunis and sail from there.

Procuring three suits of clothes such as are worn by sailors, Fatima gave one each to Fred and Will, keeping the third herself.

"What will you do with that?" asked Fred.

"Wear it," the girl answered. "It will be better. We are not yet out of danger. There are slave merchants within hearing, and I do not wish to go with them."

"It was a wise plan," said Fred, "and perhaps we had better lose no time."

They found a small vessel setting sail for Malta that very day, and Fred secured a passage in her for the party, paying out all the money he had, with the exception of one gold coin which was equal in value to a twenty-dollar piece.

At Malta they found a vessel about to sail for Marseilles, and only waiting to obtain a full crew, some of the men having died of fever and leaving the captain with less men than he dared sail with.

The captain was French, and as Fred spoke this language fluently, he volunteered for himself and Will to go as green hands, and offered to pay Fatima's passage.

In her new attire the girl appeared like a boyish Spaniard, and Fred gave out that she was his poor deaf and dumb brother whom he was obliged to take care of, their parents being dead.

Fatima neither spoke nor appeared to hear anything that was said, and therefore escaped detection, and as she remained below most of the time very few of the men saw her.

Fred pretended to be French, and Will passed for an Englishman, but as they both worked with a will no one cared especially what they might be.

One night, when they were a week out from Malta, the two friends having their watch below, Fred said:

"The island where the diamonds are hidden lies not more than a day's sail from this, and in the direct track of vessels. We must leave the vessel to-morrow night."

"Leave the vessel?" exclaimed Will. "How can we do that?"

"There are boats," said Fred quietly. "During the day we must slip some provisions into one of them and at night after we sight the island drop it overboard. Leave it all to me."

"How do you know that we shall sight it to-morrow?"

"One of the sailors told me, and from his description it is the island we seek."

"Has it any name?"

"Not that I know of, but——" and Fred hesitated.

"But what?"

"Nothing," said Fred carelessly. "It was but a whim," and no more was said.

During the next day Fred found occasion to communicate with Fatima, and to tell her of his intentions.

She agreed to do exactly as he said, and in many ways she

helped on the scheme, while apparently wandering aimlessly about the deck.

In one of the boats hanging from the davits well aft the three concealed a quantity of provisions, a supply of water, a crow-bar, a spade, and a few useful tools taken from the carpenter's room, a lantern and some candles, and some extra blankets, the various articles being put in one at a time whenever an occasion offered.

Just at dusk Fred appeared on deck and beckoned Will to follow him to the fore-castle head, where he pointed out a dark spot on the starboard, and said:

"Do you see that? It is our island."

"Are we ready to leave?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"When I give the signal."

An hour after sunset it was very dark, there being every indication of a storm, and Will feared that Fred would be obliged to abandon his project.

Soon afterwards a form passed him on the deck, and whispered in his ear:

"Get into that boat. You will find Fatima there."

Will walked away, and as he reached the rail where the boat hung he heard Fred say something in French, and immediately afterward he leaped upon the rail and called to his friend to follow.

"That boat needs securing, sir," was what Fred said to the officer on deck. "It will go adrift. I will lash it, I and my mate."

The officer growled an assent, and in another moment Fred was in the boat.

"Loosen the falls," he said to Will, "and when I speak let it go. It is dark, and we will not be observed."

A moment later the boat began slowly to descend, the blocks giving no sound, Fred having carefully oiled them.

The vessel gave a lurch to leeward and the boat rapidly descended, scraping against the side as it went down.

Suddenly she heeled far to windward, and the boat swung clear.

"Cut!" hissed Fred.

In an instant the boat shot through space, dropping upon the water at the next moment with a splash.

Seizing an oar Fred rapidly sculled the boat away from the ship, a trick he had learned of the gondoliers in Venice, and when next the ship heeled over they were safely beyond its reach.

An outcry was heard on deck, but Fred continued to ply his oar, keeping the boat before the wind and avoiding shipping any seas.

In a few moments he said to Will:

"You can row?"

"Yes."

"Then we will pull together when I fix the course by this compass. Do you know what the island is we intend to make?"

"No; you said that it had no——"

"It has a name, and one that is famous, for it the island of Monte Cristo."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DREAM REALIZED.

The waves ran high, the sky grew of an inky blackness, the wind blew fiercely, and anon there came a flash of lurid lightning and a resonant crash of thunder.

Fred and Will bent manfully to the oars, while Fatima, seated in the stern and watching the needle of the compass by the light of a lantern, kept the boat straight to the course given by the young avenger.

Although reared in the desert, and having never seen the ocean till within a month, the fearless girl seemed as much at home as the sea birds themselves, and although drenched with spray and tossed upon the crest of every wave, she never wavered, but followed the bidding of him she loved without a question.

Knowing nothing of the laws which kept the needle true to its pole—ignorant of the science of magnetism—she still knew enough to obey, and was quick to perceive the change which moving the tiller to the right or left would have upon the mark in the compass box, and never was steersman more mindful of his helm than this wild, faithful, loving child of the desert.

To hear was to do with her, and her love made her quick to understand, and she asked no reason for anything, leaving all to him she loved.

Steadily and sturdily rowed the two young men, and at every stroke the boat shot forward, keeping in advance of wind and wave, and heading straight for the famed isle whence one avenger had borne away his millions, and thither another was steering, bound on similar errands.

Nor wave nor wind nor storm kept back the new Monte Cristo, and steadily on, in spite of fatigue, unheeding the dangers that beset him he pursued his way, resolving that nothing but death should stay him, and that if he failed it could at least be said of him that he had done his utmost.

* * * * *

When the sun arose a boat, sorely strained and badly leaking, was drawn up on the sands beyond the reach of the tide, while near it stood three figures, sailors apparently, gazing out upon the ocean, now calm and blue, and with scarcely a ripple upon its placid surface.

"Well," said Will, musingly, "we are on the island of Monte Cristo, but how shall we get off? The boat brought us here, by a miracle, but it would be more than miraculous were we to cross to Marseilles in it now."

"The boat does not disturb me in the least," returned Fred, the sun falling on his silver hair and lighting up his old young face. "We have come safely through greater perils than that of last night, and shall surmount others as great."

"If any one can accomplish what he has set out to do," thought Will, "he will do it. His will is like iron, his determination unmovable, his resources endless, and, withal, only a boy not yet eighteen. I would sooner be dead than be in the place of the man whose evil deeds have transformed the once happy boy into this implacable Nemesis!"

"We have need of rest," said Fred quietly, "and there is no reason for haste. Let us sleep, and when we are refreshed we can get to work."

Taking a blanket from the boat and throwing it carelessly over his shoulders, Fred sauntered up the beach and presently entered a thicket, where he was lost to view.

A few moments later Fatima found him asleep behind a great rock, and taking a position near him the faithful girl watched him while he slept, never once closing her own eyes for fear some harm might befall him if she relaxed her vigilance.

At the end of an hour he awoke, sat up, saw the girl, and said half reproachfully:

"You have not slept. You needed rest more than I. Go now, and rest, or you will displease me."

Fatima said nothing, but presently stretched herself out upon the blanket which Fred had thrown down, and was fast asleep in an instant.

Returning to the boat without awaking Will, Fred took the spade, walked to an elevation a few rods distant, and examined again the queer old chart given him by Fatima.

"It is in that direction," he presently mused. "Yonder is the tree, and there is the black rock. Now to see the extent of the old merchant's treasure."

A few rods from the point that marked the highest flow of the tide there arose a black, volcanic rock, looking like a huge sarcophagus placed on end, and when the shadow that it cast was no greater than its base the young Monte Carlo began to dig, keeping within the darkened line.

Inch by inch he deepened the hole at the foot of the rock, till at last, when the shadow was equal in length to the height of the rock his spade struck upon something, and he paused to wipe the moisture from his head with the back of his bronzed hand.

Presently he resumed his work, throwing out one spadeful after another of earth till at last he uncovered what seemed to be a coarse leather knapsack.

Even now he did not seem excited, but drawing a knife from its sheath at his side he whetted the edge on his hand, stooped down, and cut into the thick leather at his feet.

The keen blade met with some resistance, but Fred did not relax his exertions, and he had soon made a slit several inches in length in the tough material.

Putting in his fingers he drew forth a square package, an inch in width, wrapped in some thick white cloth.

This he cut open, and presently there rested in the palm of his hand two sparkling gems, alike in weight, size and color, which seemed to have caught and retained all the glories of an Italian sunset, so brilliant was the fire which shot from every facet as their finder moved his hand.

Another packet contained a necklace which might have

graced an empress, and of which Cleopatra herself need not have been ashamed.

One large packet, less carefully enclosed, contained a number of small stones, all valuable, but not to compare with those already seen.

"The dream has not proved false," murmured Fred, "and I am rich beyond my hopes, but I would spend all this treasure could I bring back my vanished youth, and restore the happy days which have passed away forever."

An hour later he awoke his companions and cast a fortune at their feet.

Will could scarcely believe his eyes, and he cried out in great excitement:

"Diamonds! You have found them? It was true, then? The story was not false?"

"The story was true," said Fred. "The treasure is all in diamonds, easy to carry, not difficult to dispose of, and amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars, I might say millions."

"But how are we to leave the island?" asked Will. "Our boat is useless."

"Bah!" said Fred. "Ships come and go, and we can take our choice. What is a day, a month, a year, even, to us now?"

"It might find us in our graves," was the answer.

"Never till I have compassed my vengeance!" said Fred fiercely, and even those who knew him best shuddered at the savage vindictiveness of his tone and look.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. AUVAL.

There was a new sensation in the social circles of Europe, and every polite court was on the tiptoe of curiosity.

A new luminary had arisen which promised to eclipse all the former society meteors in brilliancy, and set all tongues to wagging, discussing his antecedents, his wealth and his claim to attention.

Some said that he was a prince in disguise; others averred that he was an American millionaire seeking recognition and a polish in Europe, while others declared that he was simply an impostor, and that before long the bubble would burst, and the new wonder would be forgotten.

Who this Mr. Auval was or whence he came, no one seemed to know, but it was certain that he lived in the most sumptuous style, scattered money with the prodigality of a Fortunatus, traveled in the most magnificent state, and had a greater retinue of servants than an European rajah.

He occupied two entire suits of rooms at the hotels when he remained, if for a short time only, and rented magnificent villas if his stay was at all protracted, his horses and carriages were without number, and his dinners were grander and more luxurious than even those given by kings and emperors.

He occupied a state box at the opera, appeared at all the court receptions, drove in the parks at the fashionable hours, entertained most royally, and left nothing undone that a man of distinction should do.

Now he was in Paris, dazzling even that gay capital, anon he appeared in Vienna, and turned the heads of all the Austrian ladies; again he was in Berlin, captivating even the emperor and his court, and then he was in St. Petersburg, outshining the magnificence of czars and millionaire princes.

From Rome to Copenhagen, from Athens to London, from Moscow to Dublin; now here, now there, but always in sight, he flashed like a meteor across the heaven of high life, and in six months' time his fame had spread all over the continents, and was even now on its way to a third.

This Mr. Auval was certainly no impostor in the way of money matters, for all his bills were paid promptly, no matter how large, and often having paid the rental of a house three months in advance, he would suddenly change his plans and go away after an occupancy of less than a week.

Wherever he went he was accompanied by a lady whom he introduced as his wife, a most radiantly beautiful creature, dressed in the utmost magnificence, and yet with rare good taste, and whose manners were most charming, except that she never spoke, and scarcely seemed to listen, although her wondrous eyes showed the delight she felt in the attentions showered upon her husband.

Mr. Auval had stated that his wife was a deaf mute, but that he entertained hopes of teaching her to speak and to

converse with others, the difficulty of his position being enhanced by the fact that from no one but himself could she receive instructions.

All the learned professors of Europe had offered their services, but they were declined with polite graciousness and an acknowledgment of the honor due him by Mr. Auval, who certainly, if his wife were not gifted with speech, possessed a remarkable fluency himself.

He conversed in all the languages of Europe, and was reputed one of the best Arabic scholars outside of Asia, his attainments not ceasing with his linguistic knowledge by any means, for he danced, rode, drove, hunted, fenced, and did everything that an accomplished gentleman should do better than the best of them.

His age was a matter of endless comment, for although his hair was as white as snow he had no beard, and his face, although grave, as befitted a man of mature years, had yet none of the marks which relentless Time leaves upon men's countenances; his voice was as full, clear and musical as a that of a youth's and he was as lithe and graceful in limb as a deer of the forest, his manners having that polish which only an association with cultured society can give.

His every word and deed added to the mystery surrounding him, for they might mean anything or nothing, according as one looked at them, and every person he met had a different opinion concerning him.

In a luxuriously furnished apartment in a palatial residence in the most select quarter of London, several months after the sudden appearance of the mysterious Mr. Auval, the man himself was seated in an easy chair conversing with a young man, apparently many years his junior, and a beautiful lady, who looked not more than twenty, most becomingly dressed, and with the manners of a society queen.

"I think, my dear," said Auval, "that you have sufficiently advanced in your education to open that pretty mouth of yours in public, and not give me alone the benefit of your conversation."

"You are kind to say so, Frederick," answered the lady in perfect English, "but I fear I cannot yet trust myself. There are deficiencies which I can see but you do not."

"There are none, madam, let me assure you," interposed the younger-looking gentleman in French.

"Ah, Monsieur Guillaume, you do me much honor," returned the lady, in the same language, "but you and Frederick are both too kind to the poor desert child."

"Desert child no longer," said Auval, "but the reigning queen of all Europe. I think now, Will, that you can safely announce that Madame Auval, under the care of the best specialist of Europe, has been taught to speak. A word or two at the clubs will be sufficient for, whatever the private secretary says passes for law, you know."

"Yes," replied the other with a laugh. "Humble Will Wright, whom no one considered anything a few years ago, is now the confidential adviser and private secretary of the great Mr. Auval, the golden one, and bits of wisdom from his tongue are as much sought after as are the rarest gems of the earth."

"You are my faithful friend; that I shall never forget," returned Fred Haydon, gratefully.

In the course of a day or so Madame Auval was presented at court, and conversed fluently in several languages with the representatives of the different courts of Europe there present, charming all by her manners.

The word went abroad at once that the beautiful Madame Auval had been cured of her infirmity, and the fame of her husband was still more increased thereby, so that from being the talk of three continents, he became the wonder and admiration.

Fatima, when they had all escaped, had declared that she was not worthy to become the associate of one with so many attainments as Fred, but the latter at once began her education under the best masters that money could procure, conducting it himself when alone with his wife, for she never spoke in the presence of her tutors, until at last she was fit to take her place with the finest ladies in the world, both as regarded education and breeding.

Two months after the famous cure, as people considered it, Fred, upon reaching home one evening after having attended the opera in Paris, in company with his wife and secretary, said abruptly:

"To-morrow we leave Paris for Havre, and thence to New York."

"So soon?" asked the lady

"Yes; for upon the day that the steamer is due in New York, I shall be just eighteen years of age, and then my work of vengeance, my fight for justice begins."

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTLE OPENS.

Crafton Haydon, the millionaire banker, sat in his private office in his great banking house in the city of New York, looking over a pile of papers, when his private secretary entered and handed him a card.

"I won't see anybody," muttered the banker, looking carelessly at the card. "Who is the man, anyhow?"

"I don't know, sir. I never saw him before."

"Auval. That's a strange name, and that's all there is on the card. What does he want?"

"To see you."

"Did he state his business?"

"He says he will tell it to you alone."

"It is after business hours, and I can't see any one. Tell him so."

The secretary left the room, but presently returned bearing another card, upon which was written one word, a word which was scarcely intelligible to the secretary, but which brought with it a host of associations to the mind of Crafton Haydon.

"Yussuf."

That was the word, and at the sight of it the banker turned deathly pale, and clutched at his throat as if he were choking.

"Are you ill, sir?" cried the secretary in alarm. "Let me get you some water, some brandy, some——"

"Never mind, Hastings," muttered the banker hastily. "It is nothing but a mere passing weakness. It is gone now. Show the gentleman in, but do not admit any one else."

When the secretary had gone, the banker arose, crossed the room, and glanced at his face in a mirror, and returned to his seat, muttering:

"Yussuf! Who can know that name? I have not heard it in years. Who can this be who recalls it to me? What can he want? Is it possible that that rascally Arab has found his way to this country and has come to blackmail me? No, no! It is too incredible. Why have I been so strangely influenced? What means this strange agitation? Bah! I must rouse myself!"

At that moment a man of medium height, with white hair and beardless face, dressed quietly, but in perfect taste, and wearing an air of the utmost refinement, entered, closed the door behind him, and said:

"You do not know me, Crafton Haydon?"

"No," answered the banker, his eyes falling upon the two cards upon his desk. "Is your name Auval or Yussuf? I am perplexed to know which it is."

"It is neither, although it pleases me to be known by the former. You have heard the name Yussuf before, have you not?"

"No, I don't know that I have. Is it Russian or Hungarian, perhaps?"

"It is the name of an Arab, and you heard it four years ago on the borders of the great African desert."

"And if I did?" muttered the banker. "What of it?"

"We will admit that you heard it," continued the other. "Then you must remember a scene on the desert, the hot sand, the lurid sun and the brazen sky seen through the door of a tent, a boy in the grasp of two fierce Arabs, a man pointing to the trackless waste with a look of hate on his face, the boy's frantic cries, the man's fierce commands, and then—— Ah! You do remember it."

Crafton Haydon's face was livid, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets as he half arose and then fell heavily into his chair.

"What rubbish is this you are telling me?" he blustered. "Of what interest is all this to me?"

"The leader of the Arabs was Yussuf, the boy was called Fred Haydon, and the man was——"

"I don't care who he was," hissed the other, reaching out his hand to strike the bell upon his table. "My time is too valuable to——"

"The man was yourself," continued the visitor, "the boy was your nephew; the Arabs were hired to carry him away and murder him, or leave him to die in the desert. You need not ring yet. I have not finished."

Crafton Haydon gasped for breath, stared fixedly at the stranger for several seconds, and then retorted:

"What you have said is a string of lies. I never was in Africa in my life. My nephew, Frederick Haydon, died on the voyage from England to New York, and was buried at the family plot at Greenwood. Now, sir, unless you have more important business than this I shall have to ask you to retire, or call my clerks to put you out."

The stranger fixed his eyes on the banker, seemed to fascinate him, and advancing to within a pace of the table said:

"Crafton Haydon, you know that every word I have spoken is the truth—you know that you sent your nephew Fred to his death that you might seize upon his fortune, and to-day you would be a beggar were you to make restitution. I am here for justice, and justice I shall have."

The banker stared hard at his visitor, and then beckoning him to sit down, said, with an evil smile:

"I begin to understand you, sir, and to see through your schemes. This is a clear case of blackmail. How much do you think you are going to get out of me for keeping this secret, as you call it, quiet?"

"You have not money enough, nor is there money enough in all the world to purchase my silence. I give you fair warning, Crafton Haydon, that I mean to publish your shame to the world—to beggar you!"

"How much do you want, curse you?" hissed the banker, leaping to his feet. "Will a hundred thousand, two hundred, five hundred thousand satisfy you? Name your own price."

"Not one million, nor two millions, nor a hundred thousand millions can save you from my vengeance, Crafton Haydon," said Auval quietly. "Nothing but your utter ruin, degradation and death can pay the debt."

"In the fiend's name, who are you?" hissed Haydon in a scarcely audible tone.

"I am Fred Haydon, whom you robbed and sent away into the desert. I have been a slave to the Arabs. I have endured sufferings which would have made another mad. I have come out from the midst of dangers the very mention of which would freeze your blood. I have returned at last, and here and now I avow myself your Nemesis and the avenger of a hundred wrongs done me at your hand."

"Bah! You can do nothing!" laughed the other. "You have shown your hand, but you do not know the cards I hold."

"I intend to show my hand," said Auval. "I tell you plainly at the start that I am Fred Haydon, that I am rich beyond your wildest dreams, that I mean to denounce you to all the world, that I will not take a penny of the money you have robbed me of, but that I will strip you to the last fraction, bring you to disgrace, and then—— But it will be sufficient to tell you what when that time comes."

Haydon had fallen back into his chair, and he now stared with glassy eyes at Fred, whom he could not but recognize, despite his altered appearance, finding voice enough at last to mutter:

"You can do nothing, I tell you. It is all a lie. You are not Fred Haydon, you are a penniless adventurer, you came here to blackmail me, you——"

He suddenly ceased speaking, his head falling upon his chest, his nerveless hand striking the bell by accident as his visitor closed the door after him.

The secretary heard the signal, and hurried to his master's presence, finding that the man had fainted.

Restoratives were quickly applied, and the banker recovered consciousness in a few minutes, dismissing all but his secretary, to whom he said:

"If that man comes into the bank again do not admit him; have nothing to do with him."

"But if he wishes to do business with the bank?"

"Do not transact any business with him, refuse his account, have nothing to do with him."

"But that is hardly business-like," protested the secretary mildly.

"I know what and what is not business-like," retorted Haydon. "I won't have anything to do with a man I don't know, and that is enough."

The secretary bowed and retired, and Haydon went to a cabinet, took out a decanter, poured himself a glass of brandy, drank it, and began pacing up and down the room in a nervous manner.

"Let him do his worst," he at last muttered. "He must be rich, indeed, if he can ruin an establishment so well founded as this. Let him try it if he dares! I defy him to shake me in the slightest. What can a boy like that do? Why he is

but eighteen, and a minor. He cannot even do business on his own account. Bah! I was a fool to be frightened by him. Let him try any more brow-beating games on me, and I'll strip him of every cent of his boasted fortune."

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE VAULT.

"Whose monument is this?" asked a visitor to Greenwood Cemetery of the guide, who was showing him through that famous necropolis.

"That of Mr. Haydon, the banker. You must have heard of him?"

"But Mr. Haydon is not dead."

"Oh, no; but it is quite customary for these rich men to put up monuments to themselves before death."

"They make sure of the thing being done, I suppose?" said the other dryly.

"Aha! Yes, to be sure, there's something in that. It might not be attended to afterwards."

"And this small stone? Whose is that?"

"That was put up for Mr. Haydon's brother, but it will be removed, I believe. The remains are in the vault."

"Mr. Haydon's brother was of little account, then?"

"Well, he is now, sure enough, but the banker inherited all his money from him, or rather from his nephew, who died at sea."

"The nephew is not buried here, then?"

"Oh, yes; and there is a memorial tablet placed inside the vault."

The two had approached the iron gate of the vault, and the visitor now placed his hand upon it as he peered within.

Much to the guide's astonishment the gate yielded and swung inward.

"Ah! Do they usually leave these things unlocked?" asked the visitor.

"Why, no, indeed. Ah, I see, the lock has rusted or been broken, and is quite useless. I shall have to speak to the authorities about it."

"There will be no harm in our entering now, I suppose?" asked the other, stepping in.

"Well, it is not customary for strangers to do so, and I don't know——"

"I am Mr. Auval," said the stranger. "I know Mr. Haydon, and think of opening an account at his bank."

"Oh, in that case I do not see any impropriety," and the guide hastily folded up a crisp banknote and put it in his pocket.

"Yes; and this is the tablet, I suppose?" said Auval presently. "Frederick Haydon, aged fifteen, a boy of rare promise, and one who would have made his mark in the world, had not the angel of death untimely summoned him away. Ah, very pretty sentiment. The young man's coffin is in one of these niches, I presume?"

"Yes, sir; the one just below the tablet."

"I would really like to see it. Do you know, I knew young Haydon once myself. I suppose the men working outside would take it down for us if——"

"Really, sir, I would not dare to do such——"

"Not for Mr. Auval, my friend?"

The chink and the touch of gold have a power as great as that of the famed divining rod of the old magicians.

"Ah, any one would do a favor for the great Mr. Auval, of course."

"Call the men; tell them Mr. Haydon requests it. I will explain to Mr. Haydon myself."

Two men were working outside, and the guide called them into the vault.

"Mr. Haydon wishes to have the coffin of the young gentleman taken down," he said, indicating Auval to the laborers.

"I wish to see if anything needs to be done to it," and the fingers of the men closed over two bank notes.

"Certainly, sir; anything you like."

Wooden trestles were brought, and presently the coffin rested upon them.

"I will call you when I want you," said Auval, and the men withdrew.

Upon the heavy black cloth of the casket was a solid silver plate, much tarnished, which bore the inscription:

FREDERICK.

Son of Godfrey Haydon, Esq

Died at sea Nov. 16, 18——

Aged fifteen years.

Auval bent over the casket for a few minutes, and then produced a screw-driver from an inner pocket, and began to remove one of the screws of the lid.

"What are you doing?" gasped the guide.

"Mr. Auval wishes proof of this young man's death. Not a word, sir, not a motion. You will presently understand."

The look that the avenger gave the guide was sufficient, and the latter made no further protest.

One after another of the screws were removed till none remained.

Then the lid of the casket was lifted off.

A low cry of astonishment broke from the lips of the guide.

The casket contained nothing but some bars of lead and a few rough sacks.

"That is what I wished to know," said Auval. "Remember, sir, you have seen this. Keep your secret till I call upon you for it. It will be worth your while. Whatever Mr. Auval promises, he does."

"So I have heard," muttered the man, as he drew his hand from his pocket, richer by a thousand dollars than when he put it in.

The coffin lid was replaced and screwed down, and the men were called to replace it in the niche.

"God bless yer honor for yer kindness to a poor man," they both said, as they finally left the vault, two broad gold pieces rubbing one against the other in the pockets of their earth-stained trousers.

"You need not say anything about that lock," said Auval, as he and the guide left the vault. "It will not need attending to."

Then, to the guide's utter astonishment, the great man took a large key from his pocket, swung the heavy door into place, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

The man was dumb with surprise, but Mr. Auval said:

"I could have made my investigations at night, and alone, having already seen that the vault gate was left open for me, but I wished to have a witness—one perfectly unprejudiced in the affair. You will be ready to speak when I call upon you?"

"Yes," gasped the other.

"Thank you. Ah, I see my carriage coming. Good-morning, and do not forget to keep silent. It will be a good investment to you."

"But my address; you do not know——"

"I have it. Your name is Thomas Fletcher, and you live at 1001 Third Avenue, Brooklyn."

At this moment a carriage stopped just in front of them, the door was opened by a young man and Mr. Duval stepped inside.

Before the guide could recover from his astonishment the carriage had driven away.

"Well?" asked the young man in the carriage with Auval.

"I have found just what I supposed I would find, and have secured a witness. The first step has been accomplished."

That same afternoon Mr. Haydon, the banker, sat before his desk gazing at two notes which lay in front of him.

One had been received in the morning, and read as follows:

"I am going to visit the vault in Greenwood. Auval."

The second note had been brought in a moment before, and ran thus:

"The coffin under the tablet contains only rubbish. Auval."

For a few seconds the banker sat transfixed.

"Curse the man!" he hissed at last. "Can nothing stop him? He warns me what he is going to do, and does it before I can move a finger. Am I powerless? No, no! I will thwart him yet."

That evening as the banker went down to dinner a note was handed him, the perusal of which caused him to turn deathly pale.

It read thus:

"I am going to take your children from you to-night. Auval."

"The villain!" gasped Haydon. "He knows where to strike deepest, but he shall not succeed."

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROMISE.

The palatial residence of Crafton Haydon, the banker, was a scene of splendor, and richly dressed women and handsome men crowded the saloons, passed one another on the stairs, and met in the ante-rooms.

Everywhere lights glittered, the fragrance of choice flowers was upon the air, and the soft strains of music were heard.

In the conservatory a subdued light invited fond lovers to the obscurity of its nooks and corners, the bounteously laden tables in the supper-room extended a generous hospitality to those for whom the delights of the appetite had a charm, and in the brilliantly lighted ballroom, with its waxed floor and beautiful decorations, the votaries of the dance had already assembled in considerable numbers, whirling about to the entrancing music of one of the most famous bands of the metropolis.

The banker moved hither and thither among the scenes of splendor, now welcoming a late comer, now jesting with some one who seemed to have partaken too generously of his rare wines, now encouraging some timid guest to find a partner and engage in the dance, moving from place to place, not rapidly, but in a manner that made him appear ubiquitous and evidently anxious that all should enjoy themselves.

Notwithstanding the smile upon his face, there would now and then appear a shade of anxiety which those not in the secret attributed to his desire that the affair might prove a success, and that no one should complain of his lack of hospitality.

"I wonder whether he will dare to come?" he muttered, as he stood at the door of the conservatory and stole a rapid glance within. "He has certainly not yet arrived, if he intends coming."

Leaving the conservatory, he passed to an ante-room where there were but two persons at that moment, a lady and gentleman in full evening costume.

"You are not watching," he said to the gentleman.

"I beg your pardon," interposed the lady. "We are both watching, but we came here for a moment to compare notes. Your man has not yet arrived, it seems."

"And my child, my children, I would say?" asked the banker.

"The little fellow is in bed; your daughter is upstairs with her governess. You can depend upon us to see that no harm comes to them."

"I defy your Mr. Auval or any one else to take them from under this roof without our knowledge," said the gentleman; "and, if I do say it, you could not have employed a better detective than Mrs. Howard or myself."

"I asked the inspector for the best he had," muttered the banker, "and your reputations are at stake. You have assistants?"

"Yes; one in the supper-room, one in the cloak-room, one outside the house, and one in the conservatory."

"That is good," said Haydon, evidently greatly relieved. "But now you must rejoin our guests. I will see you again."

As he passed into the main reception-room the banker saw his wife beckoning to him, and as he approached, she said: "Mr. Sinclair you know, but this is Mr. Fredericks and his wife, whom our friend has brought with him."

Mr. Sinclair was one of the best known leaders of society, and whatever he did met with his entire sanction, and his bringing an uninvited guest with him was considered perfectly proper.

Crafton Haydon was greatly surprised, not at the fact of a stranger coming to his reception, but at the appearance of the man himself.

Mr. Fredericks was the very man who had introduced himself as Auval, the banker, otherwise Fred Haydon, and his audacity in coming to the house of his enemy after the threats he had uttered was something unheard of.

His wife was a remarkably beautiful woman, and Mrs. Haydon was evidently already charmed with her, the admiring looks she cast upon the lovely creature giving undoubted evidence of this.

"Pleased to meet you, sir," said Mr. Fredericks, who began a conversation upon the political crisis which showed him to be a man of rare intelligence.

Haydon could not but listen, and he was more than ever surprised at the boldness of his avowed enemy.

Once he tried a bold stroke on his own part, by saying:

"You may think it strange, but I took you for the mysterious being who passes under the name of Auval, a banker, I believe. At least, he says he is one, and he has been in my house trying to do business with me."

"Ha, ha, ha! Several people have made the same mistake," said Sinclair, "but I can assure you, Mr. Haydon, that this is my friend Fredericks. This Auval you speak of is quite another person."

"I believe there is some resemblance between us," said Fredericks carelessly, passing at once to another subject.

"How many aliases has he, in the name of evil?" muttered Haydon, a few minutes later, as his guests passed to the ball-room, while he was left to entertain some one who had just attracted his attention.

He saw Fredericks dancing with Mrs. Haydon not long afterward, and, later still, saw the man with Sinclair and his own wife in the conservatory.

"Excuse me," he said, entering. "Mrs. Haydon misses her handkerchief, and thinks she may have left it here."

"Don't apologize. I beg," murmured the stranger, and the banker crossed to the rear of the place where he whispered to a footman just leaving:

"Have you watched that man yonder? It is Auval, the banker."

"Why, no, sir," said the man. "Auval is in the ballroom. The sergeant is watching him."

"Then watch this man, also," muttered the banker, turning and hurrying out, finding the place empty where only a few moments since he had seen the man whom he believed to be his nephew and enemy.

Later he joined the detective, and said:

"You must warn Auval to leave the house or arrest him."

"Why, he is here with some of the best people in the city, and seems to be at home with everybody. I can't do that."

"See him privately, and tell him that he is known."

They separated, and ten minutes later the banker found Auval, as he supposed, in the smoking-room, the place being almost deserted at the moment.

"How dare you come here after what has passed?" demanded Haydon, in a tone low enough to be heard only by the man he addressed.

"I do not understand," said the other, turning and revealing the face of a young, handsome fellow, not at all like that of his detested nephew.

"I beg your pardon," said Haydon, with considerable embarrassment. "I mistook you for Mr. Auval."

"I wish my bankers would do the same," laughed the other, "for then I could draw to an unlimited amount. They say he is worth billions, not mere millions."

"Yes; so I believe," muttered Haydon, turning and abruptly leaving the place, while an instant later the young man swiftly whisked a wig and mustache from his head, and stood revealed as Fred Haydon, otherwise Auval.

"So, so, things are progressing," he mused. "The man is evidently nervous; but now I must get to work again."

He passed out, and presently met the detective who had talked with the banker.

"What have you done, Will?" he asked, after exchanging rapid signals with the other.

"Left Mr. Brown, the detective, asleep in the conservatory under a bench, sent away all the rest, and dispatched Mrs. Howard, the famous lady detective, to the nursery."

"Good! All is ready?"

"Yes."

"Then finish up," and Fred went on and was soon engaged in an animated discussion with Mr. and Mrs. Haydon, Sinclair and another gentleman on a question of national interest.

"I saw you talking with my wife a few minutes ago," said Fred presently. "Did you see where she went?"

"She said she would find you," muttered Haydon, "but would not accept my escort."

"Excuse me, I must go and find her," said Fred. "We must leave presently, as we are expected at another reception. I shall soon return and present our joint adieus."

He went away, and Haydon said to Sinclair:

"Fredericks is a friend of yours? Where did you meet him?"

"Why, you confuse things greatly," laughed Sinclair. "That is Auval, the banker. He came with the Van Brunts."

"The mischief it is!" exclaimed the banker. "You introduced him as your friend Fredericks."

"No, I did not. You took him for Auval, and now you take Auval for Fredericks," said Sinclair, laughing. "What has come over you, Haydon?"

"It's very strange," answered the other. "Excuse me," and he went away in great haste.

He was unable to find Auval or Fredericks, and he doubted if they were two persons. Nor could he find the detective nor any of his assistants.

After half an hour he returned to the reception-room, where a servant handed him an envelope, saying:

"Mr. Auval's compliments, sir, and he was suddenly called away."

The banker tore open the envelope, finding within a card on which was written:

"I have done as I promised.

Auval."

"Confound it all, what does he mean?" he gasped, hurrying away.

Rushing up to the rooms above he found a nurse asleep at the play-room door, the room being empty when he entered.

In his daughter's room he found the governess asleep, and the bed empty, and in his little son's room he found that the child had disappeared.

Arousing the servants with as little noise as possible, he found that no one could tell him anything but that the children were gone was proved beyond a doubt.

Hastening below, he met a gentleman just entering.

"Ah, Haydon, glad to see you," said the man. "I'm late, I know, but I've been to three or four places already."

"Sinclair!" gasped the banker. "Why, you have been here all the evening, you and your friend Fredericks."

"I haven't any friend Fredericks," said the other, "and I have not been here before to-night."

"Then who has been here in your place, with your name and your looks, introducing Fredericks and Auval, and throwing confusion over every—"

"Mr. Auval? Why, he was at the Ogdens with the Van Brunts. Charming man, that, been everywhere, knows everybody, and his wife is just the most—"

"Confound Auval and his wife," muttered the banker, and hurrying away he sought his own apartments, where he sank into a chair, covered his face with his hands, and muttered:

"The man is inexorable, but he might at least have spared me this blow."

CHAPTER XIII.

AN UNEXPECTED RESCUE.

The morning after the reception at the banker's Mr. Haydon reached his office at a late hour, and found among his letters the following:

"Your children are safe in my care, and will not be harmed. I have done this simply to show you that I can accomplish whatever I promise.
Auval."

"The fiends take that man," muttered Haydon. "With every room guarded, with detectives all over the house, the man appears boldly and does just what he threatens. If he shows himself again I'll shoot him so sure as I live. How did he accomplish this? He must be a master of disguise, and have accomplices. Brown, the detective, drugged and left in the conservatory, Mrs. Howard decoyed out of the house, my friends impersonated, and the children taken, no one knows when, and gone, no one knows where! Oh, it will drive me mad! The man must be a very fiend!"

One of the managers presently entered, and said:

"The Riverview Bank has suspended. The greater part of the loss will come upon us, as we hold a large amount of their paper."

"Well, we can stand it. Crafton Haydon & Co. are not to be ruined by an affair like that."

"The Upperton Gas Company has failed, and we have considerable of their paper, also."

"Well?" muttered Haydon. "Anything else?"

"The Slack River Railroad Company want the money for the stocks you have taken."

"Let them have it," said the banker, "and take more stock if they want to sell."

"The bank of South America in Rio has also failed, it is rumored."

"Confound it, man, have you any more bad news?" muttered Haydon petulantly. "Seems to me I hear nothing else this morning."

"All the stocks held by us are going down."

"Then sell out!" roared Haydon. "You know what to do without my telling you."

"Our own stock is quoted at a low figure on the Street, and depositors are withdrawing their money."

"Well, go on," sighed the banker. "We are on the verge of failure, I suppose?"

"No, sir; but there may be a run, and we have not a great amount of gold in the vaults, and they won't have anything else."

"Aren't our notes as good?" demanded Haydon, with an angry exclamation.

"They say not. There is already a line in front of the paying-teller's window reaching into the street."

"Well, don't bother me about it. Go and get some more money if you haven't enough."

"All these failures and rumors of failure are hurting us, sir, and if there is a continued run we must go under."

"But there won't be!" growled the other. "We can stand any end of a run. Pay the money out as fast as it is asked for, and if you need more go and get it. I am not to be frightened by any small panic."

At three o'clock hundreds of thousands of dollars had been paid out, and the neighborhood of the bank was thronged with depositors wanting their money.

"If three o'clock hadn't come when it did," said one of the managers to Haydon, "we could not have stood the pressure. There isn't a thousand dollars left in the vaults."

"Get all you can this afternoon," muttered Haydon, "and don't open the bank till eleven o'clock to-morrow."

"They will say that we are ruined."

"Let them say what they like," was the answer in a tone of irritation. "Do as I say, and don't bother me. I am going home."

An hour later he was driving through the park behind a pair of spirited horses, drinking in the pure air, and trying to think of anything except business.

His children had not returned, nor had anything been seen of them, and since leaving the bank he had heard numerous rumors which gave him cause to doubt the ability of the bank to stand the strain brought upon it.

"Is this Fred's work?" he mused. "Nonsense. He is a mere boy. How could he do it, even if he is worth millions? He cannot do business except through an agent, and who is there that— Pshaw! I am mad to fear him."

The fears would return, however, in spite of his attempts to banish them, and his ride was anything but an enjoyable one.

Suddenly, as they were dashing along at full speed, the horses shied at something in the road, dashed to one side, took the middle of the road, and sped on like the wind.

The coachman was thrown into a mass of shrubbery at the side of the road, and the footman sprang out in terror as the horses plunged forward.

Haydon leaped forward and seized the reins, but the frightened steed had taken the bits in their teeth, and there was no restraining them.

The banker called to them in vain, and on they dashed, straight towards a steep embankment bordered by a low stone wall.

There was a sharp curve at this point, but as the horses were heading they would dash full upon the wall at the risk of their own lives and that of their driver.

A few moments only would settle the question, and Haydon turned deathly pale as he realized his danger, and sank back upon the seat as weak as a child.

Suddenly there was a shout from behind, another carriage shot by, and a lithe form left it at a flying leap and landed on the ground, just alongside the runaway horses.

A strong hand seized the bridle of the nearest horse, and a quick, sharp voice commanded them to stop.

They came to a halt, all panting and foaming, within a yard of the wall, and then the man who had stopped them stepped aside.

Crafton Haydon now flushed as violently as he had lately paled.

His deliverer was Fred Haydon, known as Auval, the banker.

"You!" he gasped. "You save my life?"

"Yes," answered the avenger slowly. "I do not seek your life, Crafton Haydon—not yet."

Then he turned, sprang lightly into his own carriage, and was out of sight in a twinkling.

CHAPTER XIV.

FLIGHT.

The run on Haydon's bank began again the next morning, and long before the regular hour for opening a crowd was clamoring about the doors.

Haydon himself arrived in his carriage shortly before ten o'clock, the driver having hard work to force a passage through the crowd.

Groans, hisses and execrations were heard on all sides as the banker alighted and was escorted up the steps by two stalwart policemen.

As the door opened to admit him the crowd surged forward, expecting to enter with him, and a dozen or more did so, the rest being held back by the officer and some of the employees of the bank.

"You can't come in here," said an officer inside, the door being closed.

"But I am inside, and intend to stay here," answered one of those who had gained an entrance.

"It's time for the bank to open anyhow," said another, "and a difference of a few minutes is nothing."

"The bank will not open until eleven o'clock."

"Better not say that outside," said the first man, "or that crowd will tear the place down."

"Well, you'll have to go outside and wait. You can't stay here," growled the officer.

The intruders closed together in a body, and one man who had not yet spoken, said:

"Let me see you put us out, my friend. It is time for the bank to open, and we have a right here. These things are settled by law, not by a man's whims."

The officer muttered something, and the anxious depositors gathered in a body before the door of the main banking-room, waiting for it to be opened.

The banker hurried at once to his own office, and called in three or four of the principal clerks, the manager and the cashier.

"Shall we be able to meet the run?" he asked.

"I doubt it," answered the cashier. "The men who have already forced themselves into the bank are among our heaviest creditors. They represent between them half a million."

"Couldn't you get any money yesterday?"

"Yes; but it will not be enough. There have been more failures reported this morning, and there are rumors of others reported."

"Confound rumors!" snarled Haydon.

"I wish we might," said the cashier. "The rumors hurt us the most, because we cannot disprove them. The market is very stringent, stocks have gone down below the dead level, and if we sell at all we sell at a terrible loss."

"What has caused all this?"

"No one knows. It is as sudden as a thunder storm."

"What is Auval doing?"

"Nobody knows. It was rumored once that he was about to start a bank of his own, but nobody knows."

"You would not do any business with him?"

"He never offered us any. If he had we might have got over this thing in safety."

"And now?"

"We must go under in two hours."

A muttered imprecation escaped the banker, as he said:

"Couldn't you have prepared for this thing in advance?"

"No. It was entirely unforeseen. They say now that your grand reception the other night was simply to blind people to the real condition of affairs, that you have sent your children away with the intention of joining them, and that you intend to take with you the bulk of your fortune."

"It is a lie!" hissed the banker.

"But you have money independent of the bank. Why don't you put that in and save us?"

"I have nothing," muttered Haydon. "The bank is all I have."

A more tremendous outbreak than usual was now heard outside the bank, and Haydon said nervously:

"Open the doors and let them in. We cannot keep them out any longer."

The cashier and the others left the room, and Haydon was alone.

He immediately locked the door by which they had gone out, went to the wardrobe where he kept his hat and coat, put them on, and then took out an oblong package and placed it in an inner pocket of his coat.

"That was a good suggestion of Johnson's," he murmured. "I might have thrown my own money into the breach, but I won't. Let the bank go. I will, at least, secure enough to live on comfortably."

Traitor that he ever was, the man now meditated flight, thinking nothing of his wife and children, but only of himself.

"It's lucky I provided the other door," he muttered, as he listened for a moment to the tramping of feet in the banking-room, "and lucky that I did not use it myself this morning. It is safer now, right in broad day and in business hours, than to sneak away in the dead of night, just when a stricter watch is being kept."

Pushing the wardrobe aside, he disclosed a small door, which he now unlocked and opened, revealing a narrow passage leading into the rear hall of the building, and thence by a flight of back stairs to an alley.

"I'll cheat them yet, my precious nephew and all," he muttered, as he stepped into the passage, drew the wardrobe close to the wall, and then closed and locked the little door which opened outwards into the passage, and not into the private office.

He then hurried downstairs, and out into the alley, where he could hear the noise in the street beyond, but where there were few or no people.

Keeping to the quieter streets, he reached Broadway just below the City Hall, and then crossed and walked rapidly in the direction of the North River.

No one paid any attention to him in the crowd, and, as he had said, it was easier to take flight thus than if he had chosen the night.

Reaching the river, he walked along until he reached the pier of an Atlantic liner that was to sail that day in an hour's time.

"They'll never think of looking for me here yet," he muttered.

He was about to enter the office on the wharf when a hand was laid lightly on his shoulder, and he turned and saw his nephew Fred.

"You here?" he gasped.

"Yes, I am everywhere."

"What do you want? Haven't you done enough? You have ruined me."

"Not yet," was the quiet answer. "Not yet."

"What more do you want?"

"You were going to Europe?"

"How do you know that?" gasped Crafton Haydon.

"Go anywhere else," said Fred, "and I will not detain you—but attempt to leave this country and I shall order your arrest at once."

"Curse you!" hissed Haydon, as he left the dock and hastened uptown unpursued.

An hour later he was on his way to the West, and it was rumored on Wall Street that the bank was on the verge of ruin.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE TRACK.

"Anybody on this train by the name of Hiram Lewis?"

It was a telegraph boy who asked the question, as he passed through a train on the Pennsylvania Railroad as it stood in the station at Pittsburg.

Crafton Haydon gave a start of surprise at the question, and hid his face behind his newspaper.

Hiram Lewis was the name he had given when he had bought his sleeping-car berth, but he did not suppose that any one except the clerk knew it.

"Any one here by the name of Hiram Lewis?" repeated the boy. "Here's a telegram for him."

The fugitive looked up, and scarcely knowing why, attracted the messenger boy's attention.

"Your name Hiram Lewis?" asked the boy, pausing in front of Haydon.

"Yes, I am expecting news. Is it from New York?"

"Yes."

"That's all right. Any extra charges?"

"No," said the boy handing the message to Haydon and standing with an expectant look on his face.

The man paid no attention to him, but tore open the envelope and read as follows:

"Bank has failed, but all depositors will be paid in full. This is not their ruin, but yours. Auval."

The man uttered an angry exclamation, and turned towards the window.

"How did he know that I had taken the name of Lewis?" he muttered, as he tore the message into small pieces. "He must have his spies watching me at every point."

He presently turned and saw the boy standing at his elbow. "What do you want?" he asked savagely. "You said there were no charges?"

"No, sir, no charges, but gentlemen generally give us something."

"Well, you won't get anything from me," was the sharp retort. "So you needn't wait."

"Well, he's the meanest man I ever struck," muttered the boy, as he went away, taking no pains to lower his voice. "I thought I'd get a quarter, anyhow. Wish I'd charged him something now."

"Doesn't want the depositors ruined, eh?" mused Haydon, as the train began to move on, "but he does want me ruined. Well, maybe he won't do as much as he thinks he will."

"Sharp as he is, and with all his spies, I will outwit him and defeat his plans. Let him beware how he drives me to bay, for even a rat will turn when cornered."

The man had no fear of arrest, for he rightly judged that Fred did not desire to have him brought to justice at once, and he laughed as he thought how he would defeat the young Monte Cristo's plans.

"If I can't go to Europe there is nothing to prevent my going to China or Australia," he thought.

"Let us see if my boy will be clever enough to prevent me."

At St. Louis he left the train and went to a small hotel, registering under the name of John Van Brunt, having first shaved his face clean before going there.

"Van Brunt," said the clerk, looking at the name. "John Van Brunt, of New York. There's a telegram for you."

"I did not expect any," muttered Haydon.

"It came only a few minutes ago, sir," said the clerk.

Wondering what new surprise was in store for him, Haydon tore open the envelope, which proved to contain not a telegram, but a letter reading as follows:

"Crafton Haydon, your every movement is watched. Do not attempt to escape me. I know just how far to let you go. Auval."

"The man's spies must have heard me tell the driver where to go, but how could they tell what name I intended to use?" mused the hunted man. "Could I have spoken it aloud when I thought of it? Yes, I must have done so. Hereafter I shall be more careful."

He left the city the next morning, and took a train for the West, traveling in an ordinary coach, instead of a drawing-room car, as before, and changing his clothes before leaving the hotel.

He had paid his bill overnight and left the hotel early, being unobserved by any one, except the porter, who let him out.

He proceeded to Kansas City without stopping, and thence on to Denver after a rest of an hour or two, and by the time he reached the latter city began to feel more easy in his mind than at any time since his flight.

There had been no more mysterious letters, no more warnings, and the man flattered himself that he had thrown the enemy off his track.

From Denver he intended to push straight on to San Francisco, whence he resolved to take the first steamer for China or Australia, it was immaterial which.

Less than twenty-four hours after leaving Denver, as the train was going through the mountains, it came to a sudden stop, shots were heard, and there was great excitement among the passengers.

Two men entered at either end of the car where the fugitive was seated, and with drawn revolvers commanded all present to keep their seats.

One man from each end then advanced, leaving the other two to cover the passengers.

No one was molested, or even noticed, until the two men met opposite where Haydon sat.

In an instant they seized him, lifted him from his seat, and carried him from the car as helpless as an infant.

It was all done so quickly that the men were outside, and the train had gone on again by the time the passengers recovered from their surprise.

Upon reaching the outside the robbers lifted their prisoner upon a horse, and rode rapidly away on each side.

Once or twice Haydon attempted to address the men beside him, but they gave him such black looks, tapping the stocks of their huge revolvers so suggestively at the same time that he presently desisted from his efforts to start a conversation.

The party rode at full speed for more than an hour, when they entered a deep and narrow valley, through which ran a path that could not be seen more than a few rods ahead, it was so winding.

At last the party paused in a circular opening shut in by high rocks, and here they dismounted.

"What do you intend to do with me?" asked Crafton Haydon, of a man who appeared to be the leader.

"You will know soon enough," was the evasive answer.

"You will not kill me?" gasped Haydon. "I have no money, and no one would pay a ransom."

"We know you have no money," retorted the outlaw, with a coarse laugh. "We took care of that. Of course you have no money. We have it ourselves."

The loss of his stolen wealth seemed worse to the wretched man than the danger to his life which he had feared a short time before.

Without money he was helpless, for he could no longer elude the vigilance of the law, could not bribe dishonest officials, could not escape.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOING DOWN.

Crafton Haydon sat before the fire in the outlaws' camp, gazing absently at the red glow under the log and at the sparks as they now and then flew out.

He had been two days with the robbers, and they had not molested him in any way or even sought to detain him against his will.

Now, as he sat gazing at the fire, the night having fallen, he again saw the picture which constantly haunted him.

The red glow was the burning sun of the desert, the logs fashioned themselves into the semblance of a tent, the ground at his feet seemed to stretch away into the horizon, like the desert, and his guilty conscience supplied all the rest.

"Curse him!" he suddenly muttered. "Can I think of nothing else, see only that?"

"Your thoughts are not pleasant ones, Uncle Crafton?" said a voice out of the darkness.

The man sprang to his feet, and then, by the light of a torch, which had just been thrust into the ground, he saw a lithe form, enveloped in a cloak, standing before him.

The white hair, the stern look of the features, the compact figure, were all too well known to him to give any room for doubt.

The man who had sworn to hound him to his ruin stood before him.

"You here, in this place?" he gasped, standing rigid.

"Yes."

"Then you are the outlaw, the robber, the hunted thief?"

"I am the avenger of bitter wrongs," said Fred calmly. "I use all means to gain my ends. You are not the man to speak of robbers and thieves."

"You have hired these villains to rob me?"

"Yes, but do not think that your money will enrich them."

"Ah! It is yourself, then, who has robbed me?" cried Haydon, a gleam of fiendish joy lighting up his face. "You have committed a crime. You have put yourself at the law's mercy."

"I have restored that which you have stolen," answered Fred. "What do I care for your money when I have thousands where you have tens?"

"What do you intend to do with me?"

"Nothing."

"Must I live with these outlaws, these robbers?"

"No, you are not worthy to live with them."

"You mean to kill me, then?" cried the wretch in sudden terror.

"No."

Haydon glanced askance at the avenger to see if there was any sinister look upon his face, but saw only the calm expression which had always been there.

"What shall you do?" he asked faintly.

"Set you free. You are at liberty to go where you will."

"Then let me have money," cried the other desperately.

"No; that has been forfeited."

"Have you no mercy?" wailed the doomed man.

"I am neither your judge nor executioner," said Fred calmly. "I am but the instrument of Heaven's vengeance. It is useless to appeal to me. I am dumb to all entreaty."

"Then I will end the suspense myself," cried Haydon, springing suddenly forward and snatching up a weapon that lay gleaming upon a rude bench a few steps distant.

He thrust it to his forehead, and was about to pull the trigger and send a bullet into his brain, when it was dashed from his hand and fell upon the ground.

"Fool! Do you think to escape me thus?" laughed Fred. "Do you think to cheat vengeance by suicide? No, no, you shall not die till you have tasted more than the bitterness of death."

Then the torch was suddenly thrown to the ground and extinguished, and when Crafton Haydon looked for his visitor he could see nothing.

He sat down by the fire again, but could not bear the sight of it, for it conjured up scenes which he would willingly have forgotten, and he turned his back upon it and gazed into the darkness.

The camp was wrapped in silence and darkness, when, three or four hours later, the wily scoundrel, who had not been asleep, stole softly into the cave, untethered one of the horses, and led him to the entrance.

He had long been accustomed to horses, and had often saddled and harnessed the most spirited animals when no one else dared approach them.

Stealing toward a group of sleepers near the fire, he deftly abstracted a knife and a pair of revolvers from the belt of one of them, and then cut away a leather pouch carried by another which he knew contained money.

Then, stealing away with the stealthiness of a cat, he crept slowly and carefully toward where he left the horse, led it gently away, and did not mount to the saddle until well along the path leading from the haunt of the robbers.

He was a thief then, as he had always been, but of a lower order, not the brilliant financier, but the thief who steals from his own low companions.

CHAPTER XVII.

STILL LOWER.

A group of rough-looking but honest men was congregated around a little railroad station in the mountains, awaiting the arrival of a train.

Presently a man appeared riding a horse, and scrutinizing glances were directed toward him.

He dismounted, entered the station, and asked the agent when the next train for the west would pass.

"In half an hour, I expect, if it isn't late," was the answer.

"Do you want to buy a horse? I shan't come this way again, and I'm breaking up. I rode here on him, but I don't want him any more."

"Where is he?"

"Just outside."

"What do you want for him?"

"He's worth three hundred dollars, but I'll let him go for less to get rid of him."

"Don't you want a ticket?"

"No, I've got one."

"Well, I'll take a look at the critter, and if I like him I might buy him or get you a customer."

When Crafton Haydon, escaping from the outlaws, opened the leather wallet he had stolen, he found his own partly-used railroad ticket, some food and a few dollars in money.

He had expected to find a small fortune from the size and weight of the pouch, but what gave it its heaviness was a bar of lead in the bottom, and the expected fortune suddenly fell to very small proportions.

He hoped, however, by the sale of the horse he had stolen to realize enough to begin life on in San Francisco, whither he was fleeing, having abandoned his intention of fleeing to Australia, now that his money was gone.

Accompanied by the station-agent, he now went outside where the group of men were talking excitedly together.

A newcomer had just arrived, and he and the others were looking at the horse when Haydon and the agent went out.

"I'll swear it's mine, though he's been clipped, and that thar white star wasn't on his forehead when I lost him," said the newcomer.

"Ask the stranger where he got him," said another. "Who knows the feller, anyhow? Never seed him around yere before."

"He's one o' them cussed hoss thieves what's got a den back yere in the mountings, that's what he is."

"Then we'd better lynch the coyote, and that'll make one less of the dratted skunks."

"What's the matter?" asked the agent, while his companion was seen to turn pale.

"The matter is that this yere is my hoss, and this feller has stole him. I knew the beast as soon as I sot eyes onto him."

"The horse is mine," muttered Haydon. "I bought him a week ago."

"Oh, yer did, hey? Who sold him to yer?"

"A man by the name of Hiram Lewis."

"Don't know no such man. Does he live around yere?"

"No; I bought him in Denver."

The agent looked puzzled, for the man had said that he was breaking up his home, and his horse was the last thing he had to sell.

Then, too, he had his railroad ticket, and no one knew him, and altogether the case looked suspicious.

"Don't care whar yer buyed him, he's my hoss," cried the claimant. "Here, you uns, I'll prove it to you yet," and stepping back a dozen paces he suddenly called out: "Here, Charley boy, here I am, come!"

The horse instantly give a whinny of delight and trotted toward the man, showing every mark of affection.

"I say, boys," the latter cried, looking at the animal's forehead, "this yere star ain't nateral, it's been put on with paint or something like that. Just look how the hair is matted."

The others crowded around, and each man declared that the star had been put on, and that it was not a natural growth.

"Now, then, you feller," muttered the owner, "what yer got ter say for yerself?"

"The horse may have been stolen," said Haydon in desperation, "but I didn't steal it. I took it from a gang of outlaws who captured me a few days ago. If you like, I'll show you where they are."

A terrible outcry at once arose.

"Yer one o' them hoss thieves yerself, but yer can't fool us."

"Don't kill the coyote, but mark him so's any one'll know him agin."

"Yes, brand the critter like they do stray cattle."

Crafton Haydon arrived in San Francisco sick and sore and travel stained, but still determined.

On his shoulder he bore the mark left by the excited ranchers, who had spared his life, but given him the brand of infamy which would last him all his life.

He had only a little money left, but he was still resolved to struggle on and gain a prominent position once more—not through any ideas of reformation, but in order that he might combat the avenger who had stripped him of everything, and show that his hate was as strong as ever.

When his money was gone he applied for a position in a bank, having a plausible manner and showing a good knowledge of commercial ways.

He obtained the place and kept it three days, when he was told that there was no further need of his services.

"A brilliant operator like Mr. Crafton Haydon is not the

sort of man we want," said the manager. "You may be repentant, but we do not care to take any risks."

"Who can have told them?" muttered the fugitive. "Is that villain still on my track?"

A day or so later he found employment as a porter in a wholesale house, but he had been there less than a week when the head of the firm said:

"We have no use for branded horse thieves in our place. You will have to go somewhere else."

"It was all a mistake," cried Haydon. "I am not a horse thief, and I can prove my innocence."

"We don't want you, and that is enough," was the answer. "Here is your pay up to the end of the week. You can go now."

One night he struck a man down in the street, seized his money, and attempted to flee, but was seized by a policeman whom he had not seen, and was taken to jail.

The next day the man whom he had assaulted did not press the charge against him, and he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment as a vagrant.

There were still lower depths to which he was to fall, but his hate of the man he had so deeply wronged was as bitter as ever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A WILD BEAST AT BAY.

The prison gates were opened, and a man in cheap but neat clothes walked forth.

"See that you don't come here again," said the warden, "and try and make a man of yourself."

A week later and two or three desperate fellows, ex-convicts, planned a burglary, and were successful.

With his share of the money thus obtained, amounting to several hundred of dollars, Haydon left San Francisco for the East, the other members of the party scattering in different directions.

Detectives were put on the track of the malefactors, but the scent led in so many directions that Haydon escaped before his complicity in the matter was discovered.

By that time he had reached Denver, and here he soon formed the acquaintance of a desperate gang of criminals, and committed many offenses against the law before being discovered.

As before, however, he managed to escape, the greater part of the gang being taken.

By this time he had saved up considerable money from his dishonest transactions, and he proceeded further East, where he would not be known, and continued his career of crime.

In Chicago he pursued the same course, but after a few bold ventures was caught in the act of robbing a bank, and was sentenced to State prison for ten years.

Among the spectators, as he stood up for sentence, he saw a man with white hair but young face, on whose stern features he read a severer sentence than that pronounced by the judge.

"Curse you, Fred Haydon!" he cried, shaking his fist at the man. "It is you who have done this, but I'll be even with you if it takes twenty years!"

"Silence!" said the judge. "You cannot insult a respectable gentleman and an honored citizen in this shameful manner. We all know Mr. Haydon to be an ornament to any society. You have fallen through your own baseness. Take him away."

Haydon darted a glance full of hatred at the avenger as he was led away, but the young Monte Cristo only smiled bitterly as he turned to say something to a gentleman at his side.

Haydon, under another name, for Fred would not disclose his real one, was sent to prison, but within two months he and another desperate fellow succeeded in breaking jail and escaping.

Haydon made good his escape, and left the State, but the other man was retaken, having been abandoned by his companion while stopping at a quiet country hotel over night.

Both had money provided them by friends outside the prison, and Haydon, ever the treacherous friend, stole his comrade's share in the night and left him penniless.

Lower and lower he sank, wandering from place to place, begging that he might obtain drink, stealing for the same reason when he could not accomplish his end otherwise, now

being in jail, now in the workhouse, now in the company of tramps.

He forgot that it was his own wickedness that had brought him to this, and that the vengeance of Heaven was pursuing him, steadily and surely, for the betrayal of the sacred trusts confided to him.

In the wretched, disgusting looking tramp that now stood in the road, undecided which way to go, no one would have recognized the wealthy scoundrel, who, a few months previous had absconded from the city of New York, abandoning wife and children and robbing those who had trusted him.

It was late in the autumn when a wretched tramp, red nosed, blear eyed, dirty and ragged, sat one afternoon on a bench in one of the uptown parks in the metropolis, looking savagely at the richly dressed people who passed.

Two ladies, a gentleman and two children approached, and the man staggered to his feet, and was about to attract the attention of one of the ladies when he saw the gentleman's gaze fixed steadily upon him.

"Fred!" he gasped in a scarcely audible tone, as he sank back upon the bench.

"Go right on," said the gentleman, interposing himself between the tramp and the ladies so that they might not see his face.

One of the ladies was Fatima, Fred's wife, now the recognized leader of fashionable society.

The other had been the wife of Crafton Haydon, the banker, and the children were hers.

She did not see the face of the tramp who had started to address her, and Fred spared her this sorrow.

The ladies having gone on, the young Monte Cristo said sternly:

"If you dare to attempt to speak to that lady I will tell the world who you are, and let the law take its course. Prison doors are standing wide open to receive you, Crafton Haydon. I have but to say the word and they close on you forever."

"Will you not let my wife give me one kind word?" whined the hypocrite.

"She is not your wife," was the firm answer. "She was, but is so no longer. Why have you come here?"

Turning swiftly on his heel Fred then left the miserable man and quickly disappeared behind a mass of brilliantly tinted foliage bordering the path.

For a moment the tramp's head sank upon his breast, and then looking up and not meeting that overpowering gaze he regained all his old fierceness, and with clenched hands and grating teeth he hissed:

"Go your way now, my fine fellow, but, as sure as perdition, I'll kill you yet. Then where will be your triumph?"

"Did you give that poor man help?" asked Mrs. Haydon, when Fred rejoined her party.

"I gave him some advice, but I'm afraid he will not take it. Money would be wasted on such as he."

Fatima turned towards Fred, and in a low tone, and in Arabic, said:

"That was your enemy, he who drove you into the desert. I saw his face."

"Yes," said Fred.

"Beware of him. He has the look of a hunted wild beast. He will kill you if he can."

"He said as much. You do not fear for me?"

"Not while I can watch over you, my own. He shall kill me, but never shall he harm you."

"There is no danger of either," said Fred, and reaching the street he signaled to the driver of his own carriage, which was standing there, and as they entered looked back, where, framed in a half circle of blood red branches, stood a miserable looking tramp with one hand raised in a threatening attitude.

CHAPTER XIX.

"THIS IS FATE. THIS IS RETRIBUTION."

All was glitter and gaiety in the house of the man known as Auval, the banker, and the cream of the society of the metropolis was gathered there to do honor to the brilliant gentleman and the prosperous man of business.

Without the snow whirled in blinding gusts, the wind whistled and howled, and icy gusts swept through the deserted streets, while within there were lights and flowers, the soft strains of music, the rustle of silks and the hum of many voices.

Beautifully dressed women and noble looking men passed to and from through the elegant saloons, and joy reigned supreme.

The banker and his lively wife received the guests and had a smile and a word of welcome for all who came, while the private secretary was here, there and everywhere, doing everything possible to aid his friend and patron in administering to the comfort and pleasure of the company.

It was growing late when Will approached Fred as he stood near the conservatory door and whispered a word or two in his ear.

A few moments later Fred stood at the door of the basement, addressing a wretched-looking man, who, clad in rags and blue from the cold, stood shivering before him.

"I am starving," said the man, "and dying with the cold. Give me food and shelter."

"I have suffered all that you now suffer and more," said Fred, "and all through you. You did not think of me when you robbed me and sent me into the desert to die."

"If you will not help me, let me see my wife and children," wailed the man. "They are not deaf to entreaty."

"I was denied all friendly aid. Now you know what it is to be without a friend. All the agonies that you suffer have been mine."

"You would have me die in the streets?"

"Yes," said Fred. "It is fate. I was left to perish."

"But let me see my wife."

"No. You left her to bear the shame of your flight, and now that she is honored and respected you shall not share her benefits."

"Curse you!" cried the wretch, springing suddenly forward, knife in his hand.

There was a quick movement, and the knife fell to the floor, while Fred stood unharmed.

"Go!" he said. "I swore that you should suffer seven-fold all that I have suffered. If you had been a man you might have redeemed yourself, but you have fallen through your own baseness. When given opportunities to rise you threw them away and became a thief."

"You have thrown every obstacle in my way," whined the other. "You have pushed me back when I tried to rise."

"No, your own sins have pulled you down. For what purpose did you seek to rise? That you might accomplish my second ruin. No, if you had been truly repentant I would have forgotten my vow made when a boy, and in my desperation. I would have aided you to live a new life, but you would not permit it. You have been baseness itself in everything you have done."

"Beware!" hissed Haydon. "You may push me too far. I swore to kill you, and I will—"

In another instant he found himself out in the street, buffeted by the wind and without a friend.

"He reads my very thoughts, curse him!" he muttered. "What strange power does he possess that he can fathom my every motive? I was a fool not to kill him when I had the power, for now I am helpless."

Through the brilliantly lighted windows he saw his wife surrounded by a host of friends, happy, radiant, beautiful, and another pang was added to his misery.

She, whom he had left alone to bear the sorrow of the loss of children and friends, and the shame of her husband's flight, was now happy, while he had fallen to the lowest depths.

And yet he would not lay the blame of all this at his own door, where it belonged, but cursed the man whom he had wronged, and attributed all his wretchedness to him.

"What is there left to me but the river?" he muttered, as he hurried away. "One plunge and all is over, and then that fiend will be satisfied. I'll do it, but I'll haunt him as long as the earth lasts, in this world and the next!"

He hurried to the river, the icy blasts fluttering his rags and beating on his face, now causing him to catch his breath and pause, and then hurrying him on as though laughing at his wretchedness.

At last he reached one of the piers where there were no buildings or fences to keep him out, and rushing to the edge he leaped out into the darkness with a harsh cry upon his lips and a curse in his heart.

"Here, here! What are you trying to do, anyway?" cried a gruff voice. "If you want to come aboard why don't you do it in the regular way, and not go jumping on a man's deck just as if you wanted to smash it in."

Haydon arose slowly to a sitting posture, and found that

he had fallen, not in the water, but upon the deck of a canal boat moored alongside the wharf and showing no lights.

The noise of the fall had aroused the skipper, who was keeping watch below, and he now came out to know what all the noise was about.

Cheated of death, even, Haydon arose to his feet, staggered forward, and said gruffly:

"Well, you needn't get so rusty about it. I fell off the dock in the dark and nearly broke my legs on your old boat. That's something, I guess. Why don't you have lights burning? I've a mind to complain against you."

"That's all right," muttered the canal boat captain hastily. "They got blown out. Come into the cabin and have something to warm you up. It's a nasty night out."

"Don't mind if I do, seeing that I can scarcely walk," was the ungracious answer, as the man followed his host to the cozy cabin of the boat where there was a light and a fire.

The captain was not at all favorably impressed with his guest when he was able to see him better, and half regretted that he had invited him down.

He was evidently the worst kind of a tramp, his clothes being filthy and all in rags, fastened together with odd bits of rope, pieces of wire, old clothes pins and a worn-out strap, his shoes gaping at toe and heel, and his hat letting in the wind and rain on all sides.

The neck of a flask, stoppered with a potato, protruded from the breast of his ragged shirt, while his breath gave the strongest kind of evidence that he had tasted the contents thereof very recently.

"Sit down and enjoy yourself," said the skipper, his guest having already taken the best chair in the cabin and drawn it to the cosiest corner by the fire.

"Sit down yourself," said the tramp. "This ain't bad, but it's not what I've been used to."

"I suppose not," laughed the canal-boat man. "That's the usual way with you fellers."

"Maybe you think I'm lying," snarled Haydon. "I tell you I've had money, a fine house, carriages and horses and servants and everything."

"Of, of course," returned the skipper, still incredulous. "Why didn't you keep 'em?"

"I was robbed, that's why—robbed. Everything was taken away, and I haven't got a cent. I made up my mind to end it, and I tried to jump into the river, but your old boat was in the way, and I couldn't."

"Well, if yer want to do it yet, you can go out on deck and jump off astern," laughed the captain. "There's plenty of room, and the ice won't stop you. You need a bath bad enough, and maybe you'd better do it."

"You don't believe me, do you?" growled Haydon, striking the table. "You think I'm nothing but an old tramp and a bum, but I could buy you and your old boat a hundred times 'once."

"Oh, yes; no doubt."

"Yes, I could. Did you ever hear of Crafton Haydon?"

"Oh, I thought you were going to say Belmont or Rothschild," chuckled the skipper.

"Did you ever hear of Haydon, the great banker of this town?" growled the other.

"Yes, I have."

"Well, that's me; I'm Crafton Haydon, the banker. Have a drink with me," and the fallen wretch drew with trembling hand the bottle from its resting place.

"You are Crafton Haydon, the banker, are you?" retorted the captain, pushing aside the extended flask. "Well, then, all I can say is that you're a thief and a villain, and you deserve all you've got."

"Don't talk like that to me," muttered Haydon, with an oath. "I ain't no villain; I've been robbed; that scoundrel of a nephew ruined me, but I'll kill him if——"

"If you're Haydon, I don't want you on this boat," said the captain. "A man that'll ruin poor people, abandon his wife and children, break his promises to the dead, rob the boy intrusted to his care, and leave him to die in the wilderness, is no sort of company for an honest man. If you are Crafton Haydon, your room is better than your company and you can go."

The miserable man staggered to his feet, seized the flask, drank all that it contained, threw it on the floor, and muttered hoarsely:

"The fiend has told everybody! The whole world knows me. Everywhere I go I hear the story, see but one face,

hear but one voice, see only that one scene. Ah! I shall go mad!"

Clutching wildly at his throat, as though he meant to tear open the veins, he staggered to the door, stumbled up the companionway and reached the deck.

"The ice is broken, the water is just below. One plunge and I sink, never to rise," he gasped, glancing around. "Yes, yes, I will do it. I am haunted. I shall never know a moment's rest. I am accursed. Ah, this is fate! This is retribution!"

He rushed to the stern of the vessel, looked down for a moment at the black waters below, struck his forehead with his clenched hand, and sprang forward.

Then he felt himself suddenly seized and thrown violently to the deck.

"What are you about?" cried the angry skipper. "You can't kill yourself off my boat and ruin me. Go to the station-house, where you belong, or tumble down into the cabin and go to sleep if you want to behave yourself."

The man only moaned as he lay on the deck, and the captain caught the words:

"I can't even die and be out of trouble."

"Come, my man, I'll find you a bed," said the kind-hearted skipper. "I can't have you dying, but I'll look after you."

"No!" cried Haydon, springing to his feet. "You know my story, and your face will haunt me. I shall see his eyes glaring at me every time I look at you. No, no, you are leagued with him, with my Nemesis. Better death than to stay with you!"

In an instant he had sprung across the deck, clambered to the pier, and was lost in the darkness.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST DISCOVERY.

"Will, my old friend, I think I have made a discovery," said Fred to his private secretary one morning a few weeks after the grand reception given at his house.

"What is it?" asked Will.

"In some of Haydon's papers, left behind after his flight, there is mention of a child, an heiress, for whose production a reward was offered."

"Yes."

"This child, I learn, was intrusted to Crafton Haydon's care, being the daughter of an old friend."

"Aha! There seems to be a similarity between her case and your own."

"This child, I find, upon looking still further among Haydon's papers, was sent to Europe in the charge of a rascally agent."

"Yes, and what then?"

"The agent took her to Spain, and was paid a sum of money for losing her. The man's receipt is here."

"Indeed! Did Haydon keep a record of these things?"

"Evidently, for I find my own case recorded here, with the dates of our different stopping places in Europe and Africa and the last one has this note: 'Fred was carried off by Yussuf and his Arabs. That's the last of him.' Very interesting, is it not?"

"Yes; but what of this girl?"

"I can only find the name of the gent. The child is alluded to as 'she' constantly. No name is given."

"And the agent's name is what?"

"Nugent, Arthur Nugent. There are several of his letters here, dating from a period of eighteen years back up to within six years."

"And you do not find the child's name?"

"No. The facts appear to be these: The girl was intrusted to Haydon by her dying father, to be provided for until she was of age, a certain sum to be expended upon her education, a stated amount to be given to Haydon for his trouble, and the remainder to go to the girl herself. If she died Haydon was to give half her fortune to charitable institutions and keep the other half. He employed this man Nugent to take the child away and keep her out of sight."

"And what eventually became of her?"

"That I cannot tell, but Nugent's last memorandum or report, whatever you call it, contains these words: 'You will never see her again, I promise you. Send remittance to me at Algiers if you don't want me to call on you.' There is more, but this is all that is pertinent."

"At Algiers?" exclaimed Will. "Why, I begin to see more of a resemblance than ever to your own case."

"Yes, and that is why I became so interested in it myself."

"Then you have investigated it?"

"Yes. I have tried to find this man Nugent."

"Yes?" said Will inquiringly.

"I sent a letter to our consular agent at Algiers some time ago, inquiring if he knew anything about Nugent. The man had last been heard of at Naples, where he ran a gambling house."

"And was that all you learned about him?"

"No. From Naples he went to Nice, and from there to Paris."

"You lost him there, I suppose?"

"Not exactly. I traced him to London, and then I lost him."

"Oh!" muttered Will.

"However, I inserted an advertisement in the London papers asking for any information of him, and a week or so ago I learned that he was supposed to have gone to America, the London police being very anxious to have him remain, however."

"And then?"

"I have advertised for him in the New York, Chicago, Denver and San Francisco papers for a week."

"And you have not heard from him?"

"Not from him, but of him, my dear Will. Here is a letter that came this morning."

"And you did not trust this business to me?" asked Will, half reproachfully.

"No," said Fred, smiling, "but not because I did not think you capable of doing it. I had other reasons which you will learn in time. Read this letter."

Will took the letter, and read as follows:

"San Francisco, Feb. 17, 18—.

"Mr. Auval:—Mr. Arthur Nugent can be communicated with through me. If you have any business of importance let me know what it is, and if you are acting in good faith. Do not set any traps, for we are too old to be easily caught."

"Mudge, Att'y."

"Have you written to Mudge?" asked Will.

"I telegraphed him just now, saying that no trap was intended, that I would call on Mr. Nugent in San Francisco or pay his expenses to New York, Canada, or any other place he would name, and pay him well for certain information he could give me."

"Did you state what the information was?"

"No."

"Of course you won't hear from Mudge for a day or so?"

"Probably not. Ah, Jackson, what is it?" to a man in livery who entered at that moment.

"A note for you, sir, most important, or I would not have intruded."

"Wait a moment," and Fred cut open the envelope and took out a half sheet of blue note paper on which was written:

"If Mr. Auval really means business and no tricks, he can find me at the 'Arbor,' on Fourth Avenue. A. N."

"Was there to be any answer, Jackson?" asked Fred.

"Yes, sir."

"Is the messenger waiting?"

"Yes, sir."

"Man or boy?"

"Boy, sir."

"Then give him this," and Fred wrote a few lines on a card and enclosed it in an envelope.

"That is an appointment for eleven o'clock," he said, when the attendant was gone. "There is Mr. Nugent's note."

"It appears that he is in the city?"

"Yes; but Madge evidently thought that he could make some money out of this thing himself."

"Oh, he may have written to Nugent to be on his guard."

"Possibly; but that does not particularly interest me."

Promptly at eleven o'clock Fred entered a quiet, neat-looking wine shop on Fourth Avenue and inquired of the jolly looking man behind the little bar if Mr. Nugent had called that morning.

"Ernie, see if Mr. Nugent has come once," said the man to some one in an inner room.

A boy put his head in the doorway for an instant, glanced around, dove back again, and presently reappeared, and said:

"The gent kin come in if he means business."

Fred entered the room beyond, and found a man shabbily but flashily dressed sitting at a table.

The latter seemed surprised, for he had evidently expected a younger man, and said:

"You have grown old, Haydon. You see I know you with all your mystery."

"You are Arthur Nugent?" asked Fred, standing.

"As if you didn't know that! What are you up to now, old man?"

"You mistake me for some one else," said Fred, seating himself. "I am Frederick Haydon, nephew of Crafton, your former employer."

"Impossible!" muttered Nugent. "Fred Haydon is scarcely twenty-one, while you must be seventy."

"I am Fred Haydon, and I am not twenty-one. If you knew my history you would not wonder that I look old."

Nugent seemed greatly puzzled, for he looked earnestly at Fred for several minutes, and then said:

"You were reported dead."

"Yes, and so was a certain young lady left in your charge by Crafton Haydon."

"I swear that I did not kill her!" cried Nugent, starting back. "That crime cannot be charged to me."

"What became of her?" asked Fred quietly. "Understand me, Mr. Nugent, before we go further. None of the information which you will impart to me will be used against you, and you will be liberally paid."

"You are not working for your uncle?" asked Nugent cautiously.

"No. I see that you do not know me. My uncle would have taken my life. Heaven spared me, and I have returned from the grave to avenge my wrongs. Crafton Haydon will never trouble you or me now."

"Dead?" gasped Nugent, with a sigh of relief as well as of disappointment.

"I wish to repair the wrongs he has done to others as well as to myself," said Fred, without answering the question, "and I want all the particulars concerning the little girl whom you left in Algiers."

"How did you know I left her in Algiers?" asked Nugent, coloring.

"Come, come," said Fred. "You will gain nothing by playing at cross purposes. How much do you want for your information?"

The man appeared to be thinking, and after a few minutes he said with a tone of decision:

"I will give you ten thousand," said Fred, "if you will tell me everything. You see, it is not a question of a few hundred dollars, more or less."

Nugent looked surprised, and even incredulous, and Fred, taking out his pocketbook, drew out twenty notes for five hundred dollars each, and laid them on the table.

"You can have it smaller or larger, as you like," he said carelessly.

"What do you want to know first?" asked Nugent, picking up the money.

"The name of the child."

"Florence Arnoux."

"Born where?"

"Paris."

"Age?"

"Now about twenty-four."

"Names of parents?"

"Alexis Arnoux and Mary Sargent."

"Any marks on the child by which she might be identified?"

"A star on the left arm, halfway between the shoulder and elbow."

"Where did you last see her?"

"In Algiers."

"To whom did you intrust her?"

"To a man named Yussuf, an Arab."

"She was then how old?"

"Seven."

"You communicated with Crafton Haydon from time to time, and received sums of money from him, did you not?"

Nugent remained silent, and Fred added:

"Oh, well, I know you did. You threatened to produce the child, I suppose, and so kept bleeding the scoundrel."

"Well, yes; that's about the size of it," laughed Nugent.

"But you finally lost sight of the child entirely?"

"Yes."

"What became of the child?"

"Lost in the desert. Yussuf never returned. Supposed to have been attacked by mountain men."

"Do you know the name he gave her?"

"Fatima."

"And she was his slave?"

"No; he was hers. She ruled him completely."

"Did she have any other name?"

"She was sometimes called the Star of the Sahara."

"She was rather fair, was she not?"

"Yes, though her hair was dark."

"You saw her after you gave her to Yussuf?"

"Only once. She was then fourteen."

"When did you see Haydon last?"

"Twelve years ago."

"You did not see him when he was last in Europe?"

"No. I wrote to him."

"And he wrote to you at Algiers?"

"Yes."

"And sent you money?"

"Yes."

"The last you ever got from him?"

"Yes."

"One question more and I am finished. Have you the records of the birth of Florence Arnoux, or of the marriage of her parents?"

"No. Haydon had them."

"That is enough. Good-morning," and Fred arose and went out, leaving Mr. Arthur Nugent thoroughly astonished.

"Well, if Haydon had that man to deal with he had a tough un!" he muttered. "He must have had a hard experience to have grown old so soon. You can't fool with him for a cent. Well, he's paid me like a gentleman, and now I'll skip. So Craf Haydon is dead, is he? I can't get any more out of him, that's evident, his nephew has given me all I can expect. Well, Algiers is a good country to live in, and there isn't much against me there, so I think I'll flit away."

"At last!" muttered Fred, as he left the place. "The mystery is cleared, and Fatima, my wife, is Florence Arnoux, the daughter of worthy people, but, like myself, the victim of that man's greed."

"Heaven has avenged us both, and out of our sorrows and sufferings has come happiness."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FRUITS OF TWO LIVES.

"Everybody has had a mystery cleared up except me, and I am just plain Will Wright, of no particular place, and no very great account, anyhow," remarked the private secretary one morning at breakfast a few days later.

"You are a good, honest fellow, Will, and my true friend," answered Fred, "and you need not say another word against yourself."

"I won't, then, if those are your orders," said Will, with a laugh.

"You see, now, I suppose, why I preferred to make these last inquiries myself instead of letting you make them, don't you?"

"Yes. You had an idea that possibly Fatima might prove to be the missing heiress, and, having so little money yourself, you wanted hers."

"If you talk like that I'll cut you off with a paltry million or two," laughed Fred.

"That would be dreadful, and I won't say another word. I'm glad that Fatima's history has been discovered, because I never did suppose that she was an Arab, and could not quite make out what she was, and so, just to satisfy my own curiosity, I am glad that the matter is settled."

"It's time you were settled yourself, Mr. Williams," said Fatima, with a smile. "Why don't you get married?"

"I'm sure I don't know any one who would take me," said Will.

"I think I know of one," laughed Fatima, "and if looks go for anything, she's coming at this moment. Ah, you need not blush so, my sworn bachelor. You know the step, do you?"

At that moment Haydon's daughter entered the breakfast room, followed by her young brother, and then by her mother.

"We are late," murmured Mrs. Haydon.

"Not at all," said Fatima. "We are early."

"I know why Mr. Will got here first," cried the boy.

"Why?" asked Fatima, while the mother tried to check him, and the young lady blushed.

"So he could see Sis, and tell her something. He said he had something to tell her last night."

"See here, young man, you don't want to tell all you know. What'll you take to hold your tongue after this?"

"I can't hold it," said the boy. "It slipped away from me."

"Yes, and a good many people are troubled in the same way," said Will, when the laugh had subsided.

"Oh, Mr. Will," said the boy, "are you going to tell Sis what you said you would now? What is it? A secret?"

"I think not," said Fatima.

"Boys talk too much," answered the young lady.

"I think you did not quite tell the truth when you said that no one cared for you, Will," observed Fred, with a quiet smile.

"I think you are all too mean," cried the girl, with charming petulance. "I wanted to keep it a secret and surprise you all."

"Well, then, I shall have to make amends by giving you away, my sweet cousin," laughed Fred, "and making you a handsome present as well."

"Are you her cousin, Uncle Fred?" asked the boy. "You're my uncle, aren't you? You ought to be Sis's uncle, too, I should think."

"You can call him Uncle Fred if you like, Artie," said the mother, "but he has been a father and a brother to us all."

"Why, that's funny. I can't make it out, can you, Mr. Will?" asked the boy, knitting his brows.

"Mr. Will is thinking of becoming a brother to you, Artie," said Fred. "How would you like that?"

"Well, I don't know. Some boys' big brothers tease them, and take away their marbles and tops and things. If Mr. Will is going to be my big brother will he do that?"

"Ask him," smiled Fred, while every one laughed, Will the hardest.

"No, young gentleman," the latter said, "when I am your big brother you can do just as you do now, play the tyrant over me and all the rest of the house, you curly-headed scamp, and now run off and play, and maybe we'll all go to the park, it's so pleasant."

The wedding was to take place in a few months, and Will Wright's future seemed as bright as his past had at one time appeared dark.

A body was brought to the morgue one day, and laid upon a marble slab for recognition.

A man had been found dead in the park, not from starvation or exposure, but from suicide, and his body now awaited a claimant.

No one knew him, there was nothing by which he might be identified, and, after a time, he was buried.

He had no money and no name, and was buried in a nameless grave at the city's expense.

The nameless dead was Craf Haydon, who closed his evil career with a crime, was denied recognition in his death, and was buried among paupers, unknown and uncared for.

For months he had not been seen in the city, but had finally returned, only to die by his own hand and be buried in oblivion.

So ended an evil life, and who can say that it was not a just retribution.

Mrs. Haydon never knew how or when her husband died, for Fred spared her that agony, although he would not claim the body or bury it among the honored dead of his own family.

He simply told her that her husband was dead, that he had not repented, and that his children need never know of his shame, and, to this day they know nothing of it.

Will Wright is married, and has two fine children, Arthur and Fred, while Fred is blessed with three, one named Will, one for Fatima, and the third and youngest named Auval, after the name which Fred himself bore while completing his work of vengeance, but now that fortune smiles upon him once more, the bitter past has become but a memory, and he seldom thinks of the old time when he arose "From Slave to Avenger."

Next week's issue will contain "THE FLOATING GOLD MINE; OR, ADRIFT IN AN UNKNOWN SEA."

HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

SECRETARY HOUSTON URGES WOMEN TO PRESERVE FOOD.

"Every housewife this year should restore to her home the often overlooked home industries of canning, preserving, pickling, and drying of perishable fruits or vegetables," said David F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture, to-day. "The large number of new back-yard gardens which have been planted this year shortly will begin to yield their extra harvest of beans, peas, carrots, beets, sweet corn, and tomatoes. The regular supplies also will reach the markets and, as happens each summer, the local supply at times will exceed immediate consumptive capacity. Not to conserve much of this surplusage of valuable food would be sinful waste. The present food and labor situations are such that no household is justified in looking to others to release it wholly from individual responsibility and constructive action in saving and conserving food. All any home should expect of others is to supply those foods which can not be produced effectively by its own members. The railroads will be burdened with the transportation of staple foods and civil and military necessities from localities of production and manufacture to districts incapable of supplying their own needs.

"It follows that all locally produced foods, conserved by home methods, lessen the winter pressure on transportation agencies and also release similar products of factories for other purposes.

"I urge every household, therefore, to can all surplus perishable products for which they have containers and to dry and keep in paper any additional surplus suitable for such preservation."

IT IS THE PEOPLE'S WAR

"The great fact that stands out above all the rest is that this is a people's war, a war for freedom and justice and self-government among all the nations of the world, a war to make the world safe for the peoples who live upon it and have made it their own."—Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.

THE PEOPLE HAVE ANSWERED.

"I know that on the 15th of June every man, woman, and child in this country will tell the world in thunderous tones that the American Congress made no mistake when it pledged all of the resources of this mighty Nation for the conduct of this righteous war."—Secretary McAdoo, in New York, speech of June 4.

BOND PURCHASES AND NATIONAL SAVING

In a speech delivered by Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo in New York City June 4, 1917, he made the following statement:

"If this war continues for another 12 months, it is probable that the total amount of financing the Government will have to do to cover its own expenditures and extend the necessary credit to the allied Governments will amount to ten billion dollars."

This or some large amount will be expended by the Governments of the United States and its allies in the United States in the purchase of products of various kinds of our farms, factories, and mines.

This money is to be raised largely by the sale of bonds in the United States which have been and will be purchased by the people of this country.

Economists are now speculating as to whether under these conditions the people of the United States are going to spend as much as they ordinarily would and to their usual expenditures will there be added the ten billion dollars or such sums as may be spent by the Governments, or will the people curtail their expenditures by approximately the amount they invest in Government bonds, with the result that the expenditures in America this year will be practically the same as heretofore, the people purchasing approximately as much less than usual as the Governments purchase more.

It is hoped that this happy balance will be effected. The large bond buyers will very probably curtail their investments along other lines to the extent they invest in Government bonds. Their ordinary expenditures, though, will probably remain the same.

It is regarded as probable that the great body of purchasers of the smaller amounts of Liberty Loan Bonds are going to curtail their living expenses, largely in the way of cutting off luxuries, pretty much by the amount they invest in Government bonds. The man with an annual income of a thousand dollars who bought or buys a hundred dollar Government bond will cut down his yearly expenses one hundred dollars; the ten thousand dollar a year man who has bought a thousand or a twenty-five hundred dollar bond will cut out superfluities and luxuries to that amount.

Of course this is a matter largely of surmise, but the conclusion seems based on sound reasoning and many known instances. It is stated with confidence by publicists that the great majority of the purchasers of the Liberty Loan Bonds will at the end of 12 months be richer by the amount of their bond purchases, having by economy saved that much during the year.

The Liberty Loan Bond issue is going to be a tremendous factor for good in the economic life of the American people. The expenditure of vast sums for American products will bring prosperity. If this is accompanied by economy, our country will indeed be fortunate.

HUSTLING JOE BROWN

—OR—

THE BOY WHO KEPT THE TOWN ALIVE

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER IX (Continued).

There were three women and three men in it.

The ladies seemed quite hilarious, for they were singing and screaming.

From the way the machine wobbled, Joe thought the man who was driving it might be a little drunk.

He soon lost sight of it, and pushed on until he came to the gate of Oaklands.

Looking in, he could see a glare of light among the trees.

The house appeared to be all lit up.

Joe knew that the body of Mrs. Bissland had been removed during the afternoon to the shop of the local undertaker.

He concluded that in spite of the fact of a death having just occurred in the house that Mrs. Redding was entertaining guests, and that perhaps it would be just as well for him to go in some other way than through the big gate.

So he followed the wall along until he came to a place where the trees and shrubbery grew pretty thick behind it, and then, climbing to the top, dropped down within the park.

He made his way among the trees until he came in sight of the house.

It was all lit up, and there were many people on the piazza, which had seemed so deserted the night before.

Within the long parlor he could hear some one playing dance music on the piano and see white figures flitting about.

"So they are having a dance," he thought, "and that woman just died. They must be a fine bunch! I wonder what the colonel thinks of all this?"

But whatever Col. Redding might be thinking, Joe himself thought that it behooved him to be pretty careful if he did not want to get into serious trouble.

So he watched closely for some minutes, and having decided that the coast was clear, made for the secret door.

Here in the angle of the extension there was little danger of his being discovered unless some one happened to come suddenly upon him.

He pressed the nail three times, and after a few minutes' wait the secret door flew open, and there stood Tommy Soul in the dark at the foot of the stairs.

"An' is it youse, Joe?" he whispered. "In wit youse, quick! Sure, the boss is waitin' for yer, an' a swate ould time I've been havin' wit him all day."

"Is he still hitting the stuff, Tommy?" demanded Joe, as the door was closed behind him.

"Not so bad now," replied Tommy; "but it was

bad enough dis mornin', so it was. Sure, it's only meself who kin do annyting wit him dese toimes. I was with him for years, as mebbe ye know. De fust Mrs. Redding sat a lot of store on me; but dis one! Pah! But she's a bad lot, Joe! Dat's what she is. Sure, dey are havin' a ball in dere, an' Mrs. Bissland lyin' dead at de undertaker's downtown. Dey carted her away as dough she had been a dead pig or something. I never see de like. But come upstairs, bye, or he'll be gettin' uneasy. I can't light no light, so you'll have to feel yer way. Better ketch on to me coat-tails to make sure."

And with Tommy's coat-tail for a guide, Joe went upstairs.

At the top of the flight was a door, and when Tommy opened this there was a hanging lamp which illuminated a little hall.

Another door opened at the end, and Col. Redding looked out.

"Hustle in here, Joe!" he called. "I am waiting for you!"

CHAPTER X.

JOE UP AGAINST THE "BURGLARS" AGAIN.

The room into which Colonel Redding ushered Joe was about as snug a little den as one could ask to see.

It was most comfortably furnished—luxuriously would be a better word.

The walls were lined with bookshelves and hung with pictures.

There was a cabinet of minerals, another of stuffed birds, and over the mantelpiece was a fine trophy of arms.

Rooms opened from it on both sides, all rather small but very snug.

Joe did not understand how such rooms could remain undiscovered, but he noticed that there were no windows, ventilation being supplied through the ceiling.

Colonel Redding placed a chair and told Joe to sit down.

Tommy Soul withdrew to some other room.

"I thought you were never coming!" was the first remark of the colonel, who appeared to be in no worse a condition than he had been the night before.

"I think I am about on time, sir," replied Joe, consulting his watch. "It is just ten o'clock."

"Oh, I know," said the colonel, "but time has hung heavy on my hands. I have had a dreadful day, Joe. You are aware, I presume, that my wife has returned?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is as disagreeable as it was unexpected. She has brought with her the miserable, dissipated bunch with which she has chosen to surround herself. My situation here is a dangerous one, Joe. The house is filled with my enemies. To think of it! Here in my own house I cannot regard my life as safe."

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

KNOTS IN BOARDS.

We find knots in the boards which we notice in a lumber pile or in any other place where boards happen to be because the smaller limbs which grow away from the larger limbs of trees grow from the inside as well as the outside of the tree.

When you see a knot in a board it means that before the tree was cut down and the log sawed up into boards, a limb was growing out from the inside of the tree at the spot where the knot occurs, says the Book of Wonders.

You will also find that the wood in the knot is harder generally than the rest of the board. This is because more strength is required at the base of a limb and in the part of the limb which grew inside the tree than in other parts, for the limb must be strong enough to support not only the limb itself but also the smaller limbs which grow out of it.

OSTEND RUINED AS GERMAN BASE.

Ostend's harbor works were so badly smashed by the bombardment of the British fleet that the Germans apparently have given up trying to use the Belgian port. British naval airmen, flying over Ostend harbor, report that it is deserted, and two damaged destroyers have been towed to Zeebrugge. The Admiralty issued the following statement:

The Vice-Admiral at Dover reports that the latest reconnaissance of Ostend shows that all large shipping has been removed from that harbor. Two destroyers lately reported as being towed to Zeebrugge are probably those damaged during the bombardment which have been removed from the basin. The harbor presents a deserted appearance. A squadron of British war vessels bombarded Ostend from the North Sea the other morning, firing many rounds. The port and harbor works were badly damaged and an air reconnaissance the following day showed that the submarine shelter and destroyers had been badly hit. The German destroyer S-20 was sunk in action.

WILLARD BUYS CIRCUS.

Jess Willard, world's heavyweight boxing champion, on June 11 took over the control of the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show and Circus, which heretofore has been owned by Edward Arlington, a local showman. News of the transaction, which makes Willard the owner of his own circus, reached this city in the form of a telegram from Holyoke, Mass., announcing that the heavyweight champion had paid Arlington the sum of \$105,000 for control of the organization.

Roy O. Archer, secretary to Willard, attended to the details of the sale, and the purchase included two trains of cars, 200 horses, and all equipment. Archer, a lifelong friend of Willard's was formerly

in the banking business. In the telegram it was stated that the show started operating under the management of Willard June 11, and it is the ambition of the champion to own the finest tent show property in this country.

In the management of the show Willard will be assisted by Nelville B. Raymond, a local showman with offices in the Knickerbocker Building, and the details of mapping out routes and railroad schedules will be looked after by Arlington, the former owner, who has had considerable experience in the line through his connections with other shows.

THE STATUE OF OLYMPIAN ZEUS.

The Statue of Olympian Zeus was the crowning work of Phidias, most famous of all the Greek sculptors, the same Phidias whose Pallas Athena in bronze crowned the Athenian Acropolis.

Phidias invented the process of making a wooden statue and covering it with plates of ivory and gold, the former for the flesh parts, the latter for the garments, so cunningly put together that no joints were visible. This was called "chryselephantine."

Phidias's success won him many enemies. He was accused of carving his own portrait and that of Pericles, his patron, among the figures that adorned the shield of Athena; for this sacrilege he was banished from Athens. He found a refuge at Olympia, in the old kingdom of Elis, in the western part of the Peloponnesus, where was the stadium in which the Olympia Games took place. The Olympians were busy building a great temple to Zeus when Phidias arrived. The holy of holies was still waiting for a statue of the great god, for no sculptor at Olympia had been found worthy to carve it.

Phidias undertook the task. Eight years later he completed it. The statue is said to have been about forty feet high. It had a core of wood strengthened with iron, and saturated in oil. Over this were laid plates of ivory to represent the flesh. The eyes were made of the finest gems. The mantle, hair, laurel wreath and sandals were of pure gold, enameled in colors and set with jewels. The god sat upon a throne on a platform thirty feet long by twenty feet wide. Lions and sphinxes, groups of statuary and bas reliefs covered and surrounded it. The statue stood for nearly a thousand years. In 393 A. D. the Olympian Games ceased and the city fell into decay. In 408 A. D. the temple was burned; possibly the statue was burned with it; if it survived, it was broken up and carried away. An earthquake finished the destruction; the river Alpheus overflowed the ruins and buried them in silt. Since 1875 much of the ruins, including the foundations of the temple, have been uncovered and all that remain of its sculptured treasures are now to be seen in a little museum on the spot.

NEWS OF THE DAY

DOG ADOPTS COYOTES

Four coyote pups have been adopted by a mother dog on the ranch of Arthur Pefley, north of Santa Ana, Cal.

The coyotes were found in the foothills back of El Modena by Virgil Pritchard, a high school boy, whose dogs fought off the mother coyote while Virgil got away with the little coyotes. Clarence Pefley had a dog with two puppies.

The four strangers were put on the ground near the mother dog and the puppies, who were busily engaged in partaking of a meal. Rather bewildered, the coyotes crept to the mother dog. The dog eyed the coyotes, then, when they approached, she began licking them, and soon the coyotes were just as busily engaged in eating as were their cousins.

GIRL LASSED IN FLOOD.

Lewis Worthem, known in the region where the States of North and South Dakota and Montana join as one of the most expert ropers of the range, by his ability to throw a lariat, saved a father and daughter from drowning in the Yellowstone River.

Andrew Holthouse, a homesteader, with his daughter, had started for the town of Laurel in a farm wagon and, while attempting to cross the Yellowstone River, which was swollen by the melting of the heavy snow of the winter, were engulfed in the flood. The horses escaped to shore, but the father and daughter were carried down-stream in the wagon box until the box was caught by a wire fence. The father and daughter were compelled to stand to keep their heads above water.

Worthem, who was employed near by, heard their cries for assistance and went to their rescue. With a dexterity acquired by long practise, he hurled his lariat to the girl and dragged her back to land. Then he rescued Holthouse in the same manner.

ALFALFA LUNCHEON SERVED.

Alfalfa, which is usually thought of as food for cattle, was served to Kentucky farmers in the form of hot biscuits, doughnuts, cake and candy, at a luncheon during the recent farmers week exhibition of the Agricultural College at the State University, as told in the July Popular Mechanics Magazine. The progressive young women of the domestic science department took care of the cookery and convinced their farmer guests that very palatable products may be obtained for the table from their alfalfa crops. The flour of alfalfa is of a creamy tint before cooking and a light green afterward, and while pea-green biscuits may not at first appeal to the average housewife, the flavor is regarded by many as rich and delicious. Food re-

quirements may easily result in greatly increased use of alfalfa for flour in the near future. The recipes used in cooking it are about the same as those for wheat flour. Alfalfa candy is made from a glucose pressed from the stalk.

A REMARKABLE OPERATION.

Removing an open safety-pin which was swallowed by a seven-months-old baby with the sole aid of X-rays and a snare, was the remarkable operation recently performed by Dr. G. S. Otrich of Belleville, Ill.

When an X-ray photograph was taken of the child, says Popular Science, it was discovered that the open pin was lodged in the esophagus, with the point sticking upward toward the child's mouth. The X-ray tube was arranged beneath an ordinary table, so as to throw the light upward, and the child placed so that the light from the tube would be in a direct line. A fluoroscope was adjusted directly over the child, and the obstruction became clearly visible. The doctor passed a small snare into the esophagus, and with infinite care passed it slightly beyond the pin. After withdrawing it until the pin seemed to be engaged, he closed the snare. On the first attempt the pin was closed and withdrawn.

WORTHINGTON DISPOSES OF HIS STAMP COLLECTION TO N. Y. PHILATELIST.

The finest collection of postage stamps in America reputed to be worth \$1,000,000, has been sold by George H. Worthington of Cleveland, Ohio, to a New York collector. This was announced by J. C. Morgenthau, a brother of Henry Morgenthau. The name of the purchaser was withheld.

The Worthington collection, which is second only to the collection of Count Serari of Paris, has won many medals, including the gold medal at the philatelists' exhibition in New York in 1913. It contains some of the rarest stamps in the world, including the United States postmasters' issues of St. Louis, Providence and New York; the 16, 24 and 90 cent invert of 1869 and the Buffalo invert. The rare first issue of Mauritius and the Hawaiian Missionary issue on covers, the Rumanian first issue and a set of valuable West Australian stamps are also included in the collection, which, Mr. Morgenthau said, will be broken up and sold.

Mr. Worthington has devoted more than thirty years to collecting stamps. He will retain his entire envelopes and Western franks. Philatelists had thought that the collection would be left intact to the city of Cleveland.

Mr. Worthington is a retired capitalist and railroad director and was once president of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, part of which he built.

OUT FOR MONEY

—OR—

A POOR BOY'S CHANCE IN A BIG CITY

BY J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER VI (Continued).

"There, Funny, see what you've done!" he cried, taking the broken ink bottle and paper out of his pocket and throwing them on the grass. "That'll cost you a nickel."

"Gee!" said Butts. "That ain't blood, is it? I didn't think I hit yer hard enough for that."

"No, it's red ink. Look at my fingers. It's all in my pocket, too. You're a clumsy guy, you are."

"Well, how did I know you had a stationery store in your pocket? Gee! I'm sorry if your coat is spoiled."

"Maybe it isn't," said Phil. "The inside of my pocket is all wet, but it may not run through. It's lucky the stuff is dark. It won't show much. All the same, you owe me a nickel."

"That's all right," said Butts, "and here is some paper to get the worst of it off. I am awfully sorry, Phil. I wouldn't've done it if I'd knowed."

"Of course you wouldn't, but you don't want to go biffing every one you see like that, anyhow," said Phil, sponging out his pocket with the crumpled paper.

It did not seem likely to run through and soil his jacket, but the inside of his pocket was still wet when he left the house to go uptown.

He had washed his hands so that none of the ink showed on his fingers, and he was careful not to put his hand in his pocket.

He arrived at Daisy's house shortly after eight o'clock, and was greeted very cordially by the young lady and her mother and by a boy of ten, Daisy's brother.

There was present also a young man of about twenty who had a weak mustache, dressed showily and tried to monopolize the young lady's company.

He was introduced as Harold Waterbury, and offering Phil the tips of his fingers, said:

"Ah, you're the young fellah that did something for Miss Daisy? I suppose you think it was a great thing?"

"I hadn't thought much about it," answered Phil, flushing.

"Ah, you are errand boy in the bank? Expect to be a cashier in a yeah or so, I suppose?"

"Oh, less than that; six months is the limit," said Phil, realizing that the young man was making game of him and resolving to pay him back in his own coin.

"Aoh, it's very vulgah to work," said Harold. "I don't have to do it myself; I have my own fortune."

"Work keeps a fellow out of mischief," said Phil.

"Yas. I suppose so, common fellahs, but gentlemen don't have to work. I don't."

Phil did not say anything, and others presently came in and Mr. Harold Waterbury gave his attention to them.

Whenever he could he said disagreeable things to Phil and tried to create the impression that the boy had boasted of what he had done and had presumed upon it to get into the house.

After a while Tom, Daisy's young brother, called Phil aside and said:

"Say, I think you're all right, but that dude is jealous. I guess Daisy talked too much about what you did; but then, that's just like all the girls. They make a lot out of nothing."

"It wasn't much, anyhow," said Phil, smiling.

"Of course not," said the wise youngster, "but girls will gush, you know, and Harold Waterbury doesn't like it. Don't you mind what he says."

"I shan't," said Phil.

"He's sweet on Daisy and don't want any one to go near her, but she won't give him a mortgage on her. She don't care for him. I don't, either. He's a dude. Get on to his swallow-tail. He puts on too many lugs to suit me, but I like you 'cause you're the right sort and don't put on any frills."

"Thanks," said Phil, smiling. "I want to make all the friends I can."

"And don't you take any notice of his talk. If he spoke like that to me I'd call him down, but you needn't mind him."

"No, I won't," said Phil, "and it's very nice of you to speak of it."

"That's all right," said the boy. "I know what's right, and I don't like to see that dude trying to do you up in that low-down fashion."

"Oh, I don't think he'll do me any harm, young fellow," said Phil, laughing, "so don't think any more about it."

More and more young folks, girls and boys, arrived, till at last the parlors were quite crowded and there was little room to move about.

Then they had dancing, Daisy's mother playing the piano.

Phil did not join, of course, but he enjoyed looking at the others and talked with Tom or one and another of the boys and girls not dancing.

Once Harold Waterbury passed quite close to him, and it seemed to the boy as if the other pushed him more than was necessary.

"Excuse me, I didn't think I was in the way," he said, stepping back.

Harold said nothing and passed on.

Presently the dancing stopped, and then Daisy said:

"Dear me, I've dropped my bracelet. Don't step on it, anybody. I really do not know when I lost it, though. Has anybody seen it?"

(To be continued.)

FACTS WORTH READING

JULY WILL SEE 1,200 BOY SAILORS IN TRAINING.

Camp Dewey, the Eastern training station of the United States Junior Naval Reserve, near New London, Conn., is now in operation for the summer season, with more than 300 cadets in attendance, 200 of whom arrived here by special train from Corpus Christi, Texas, and other Southern points. The brass band and bugle corps from the New York Training Station arrived recently. The young sailors are coming by tens and twenties every day, and it is expected that by July 1 more than 1,200 boys will be training here for the navy and merchant marine.

Twenty-two men-o'-war cutters and an eighty-foot launch have been added to the marine equipment. A mess hall, accommodating 1,000 cadets at a meal, has been opened. Major Willis J. Physioc is in command of the camp again this summer.

Captain Lewis Till, drillmaster at National Headquarters, 231 West Fifty-eighth Street, New York City, reports that he is simply swamped with applications of boys who want to go to Camp Dewey, and that he is arranging a fair and bazaar to raise funds to send 200 poor boys of the west side of New York City to the camp.

HOW ATTAR OF ROSES IS MADE

Grasse is the city of perfumes, and, more particularly, the city of perfumes of roses. In the June St. Nicholas S. Leonard Bastin describes a visit to this French city where the fields are filled with roses and orange groves. "The first stage in the extraction of the perfume," writes Mr. Bastin, "consists in the separation of the petals of the flowers from the other parts. Just at the time of our visit roses figure largely. The baskets of blooms first go into the hands of scores of women-workers, who, with deft fingers, deal with each blossom. On the floor of the factory there is piled a heap of roses several feet in height, and the entire quantity would make many fair-sized cartloads! The most precious of all the perfumes distilled in the factories is the attar of roses. No less than forty-five pounds of rose petals are needed to make one gramme (15½ grains troy) of the essence. Briefly, the methods of extracting the fragrance are as follows. The petals are spread between sheets of glass which are held about four inches apart by wooden frames. On each side of the glass is a layer of lard, a little less than half an inch in thickness. The sheets of glass, with their load of petals, are piled one above another, and at the end of about twenty-four hours it is found that the essential oil from the flowers has been absorbed by the lard. The lard is finally melted in a large iron vessel and is then mixed with spirits. The es-

sential oil of the flowers rises to the surface in combination with the spirit; finally, it is collected and filtered. This particular plan is known as the 'cold method.' "

SOME PLEASANT FACTS

The Liberty Loan of 1917 was a great success in whatever aspect it is considered. The Government called for two billion dollars and over three billion dollars was subscribed for by more than four million people. This large subscription and this great number of subscribers were obtained, after a short campaign, from a Nation that as a people were not accustomed to purchasing Government bonds. The spirit with which vast numbers of citizens and organizations worked to make the loan a success is not an unimportant element in making the loan not merely a success but a triumph.

It should be remembered, too, that the bond issues of other nations were sold when the foe was either on their territory or at their very gates. Our bonds were sold when danger was far from us. There was no duress, there was no hysteria, and there was but little war spirit. The bonds were bought in the calm exercise of patriotism and sound business judgment after a campaign of education and information.

Richmond, Va., the old capital of the Confederacy, bought a Liberty Bond for every five inhabitants. Montana, in the far West, largely exceeded its quota of bonds. Little villages all over the country exceeded their quotas as the metropolis of the country greatly exceeded its. There was hardly a State, city or community that did not do the same. Poor crop conditions, a recent great fire, and other local causes resulted in two districts falling a little below their allotments, but the large oversubscription everywhere else more than made up for this unavoidable deficiency. Cities with large foreign-born populations subscribed as liberally as others.

The united spirit of the American people, the solidarity of the Nation, made up as it is of people from all nations, have been demonstrated.

A second loan is contemplated within the next few months. The same things that made the initial loan of two billion dollars a success will operate to make the new one equally successful. In fact, the information regarding Government bonds and finances now possessed by the people of the country will make the placing of the next issue of bonds less difficult. Those subscribers of the first issue who were not allotted their full subscription will give the new issue a start of more than a billion dollars, since it may be regarded as certain that they will not lose the opportunity to obtain the amount of Government bonds desired.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

DOGS AS CART DRAWERS.

The useful work performed by dogs in France reminds us that within living memory dogs were employed to draw carts in England for pleasure as well as for the conveyance of fish. In the first half of the nineteenth century they were largely used by workingmen and the humble members of "the fancy" for Sunday outings.

The dogs employed were sturdy animals of a mongrel character, generally with a strain of the old English bull mastiff. Twenty miles in and out was nothing to them, and while on these excursions they were sparingly fed on bread soaked in a little beer, which is said to have been a sustaining diet.

ARMOR PLATED SOLDIERS?

Getting its inspiration from the valuable service already performed by the steel helmet, La Nature of Paris suggests that the soldier's entire body should be encased in armor. It proposes, says the Popular Science Monthly for June, that the sides of the head, neck and upper part of the chest be covered with a gorget, a kind of collar, and the loins with a kind of skirt, like the lower part of an habergeon, both in chain mail. A cuirass, or breastplate, of movable plates of steel would protect the chest and back, and hinged steel elbow pieces and knee-pieces would cover the joints. A face mask and goggles would complete the suit. The armor would be light enough to afford perfect freedom of action.

QUARTERS FOR 3,000 MILITIAMEN BEING BUILT AT CAPE MAY.

Work was begun June 18, by Cramp & Co. on the buildings of the naval militia barracks on the Henry Ford farm here. These buildings will cost between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 and will consist of twenty large barracks and dormitories, officers' quarters, boiler house, laundry, and a hospital.

All of these buildings will be of frame and one story in height, and will be spread over 400 acres. This property was leased from Henry Ford on Monday by Mayor William L. Stevens of Cape May, who turned over the agreement to the Navy Department.

The work will be pushed night and day. The camp will take care of 3,000 naval militiamen when completed.

FROZEN EGGS FROM CHINA

Frozen eggs, shipped from China without shells, are helping combat the high cost of living on the Pacific Coast and throughout the Middle West.

In the ports of Seattle and San Francisco 34,500,000 eggs arrive annually, in tin cans containing fif-

teen to thirty pounds each. One egg weighs two ounces.

A. L. Kinsley of the United States Food Laboratory here says that a much smaller percentage of bad eggs are found in these shipments from China than in the local commodity.

Two companies—one English and one American—shell, pack and freeze the eggs in China.

The eggs cost at least one-third less than locals, it is said, because of the smaller cost of production—not on the part of the hens, but laborers who gather, pack and distribute them.

NEW IDEA IN SCENERY.

Not satisfied with having mountain scenery within a few miles of the city, Denver has sent out into the Rockies and brought it into the city limits by the cartload.

The scenery is not paintings or photographs, but actual reproductions of rugged cliffs and majestic boulders selected for bear pits at City Park.

Agents of the city spread a gelatinous material over the most striking cliffs during the day and removed it in the cool of the morning, thus retaining an accurate impression. This was converted into plaster-of-paris casts, in which form the reproductions have been brought to Denver. The molds will be constructed in concrete and shot, with cement guns in colors and tints to simulate the original rocks from which they were taken.

HOW TO BORROW \$7,000,000,000

How, it may be asked, can the President borrow \$7,000,000,000 when there is not that much money in the entire country? The answer is that it will not all be borrowed at one time in one lump sum. Portions of it will be borrowed at different times; and soon after one portion has been borrowed it will be spent, and those who receive it can lend it again. This can be made clear by an illustration: Mr. Smith, a shoe merchant, has \$500, which he wishes to lend to Uncle Sam. He gives the Government the cash in the form of a \$500 bill and receives in return a bond (a promissory note) for \$500. Shortly after this transaction Uncle Sam buys from Mr. Smith \$500 worth of shoes for the soldiers and pays for them, let us say, with the identical \$500 bill which he borrowed from Mr. Smith. Now, if Uncle Sam is still borrowing money, Mr. Smith, if he desires to do so, can lend his \$500 bill to the Government, a second time, and receive in exchange a second bond for \$500. Thus our \$500 bill has served as the means of borrowing \$1,000. Of course, by repeating the transaction often enough the \$500 bill could be used for borrowing many thousands of dollars."

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JULY 25, 1917.

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166 West 23d St., New York

Good Current News Articles

Henry Beach, living three miles south of Arlington, O., was disturbed by the night meowing of cats. He got up and secured a shotgun to kill the cat that meowed the most. He fired at a black animal, but the contents of the gun went into Beach's hand. He went to a Findlay hospital, where three of his fingers were taken off.

American gray squirrels, introduced into Richmond Park, near London, have spread into the adjacent country and proved such a pest that the authorities are taking measures to exterminate them. They not only drive away the native red squirrel, but work great damage in gardens and orchards.

Ninety-eight years old and working daily is the record of John Bruce Pinkham, a collar maker of Wilmington, Del. Pinkham, despite his age, has worked every day for fifty-one years. He walks to and from his work. During the Civil War he served with the Texas Rangers in the Confederate army. He is one of the oldest citizens of the State, enjoys good health and takes a keen interest in the events of the day, especially the war.

Secretary Wilson, of the Department of Labor, has authorized the rental of the Mountain Park Hotel, forty miles from Asheville, N. C., as quarters for the German civilians interned in the United States, nearly 2,000 of whom are now quartered at immigration stations. A large part of those detained can be accommodated at this hotel, and the remainder will be quartered upon government land in Western North Carolina as soon as quarters can be prepared for them. Government men are now surveying the Davidson river meadows in Pisgah National Forest, and local government officials assert that the Germans will be housed there as soon as wooden barracks and sewer and water systems can be installed.

The baseball season on the western front is in full swing, writes the Associated Press correspondent at the British headquarters in France. Under the shadow of Viny Ridge a great game was played one afternoon before an all-khaki audience on a bit of the battlefield on which the shell holes had been filled in and a rough grandstand erected for the officers and other spectators, including General Horne, commanding the first British army, who has become an enthusiastic fan. The game was between teams representing two Canadian brigades. As a matter of fact, all the teams in what may be called the World War League are now composed of representatives of the numerous Canadian bodies, and all the players are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the American forces to arrange for an inter-league series. The games are played twice a week.

Grins and Chuckles

The Overbearing Lawyer—Ignorance of the law excuses no one. The Culprit—I'll be sorry for you, then, if you ever get in trouble.

"Did you get a recommendation from your last mistress?" "Yes, ma'am." "Where is it?" "Sure it wasn't worth keeping, ma'am."

"He says he's traveled thousands of miles!" "Ah, he must have seen a great deal!" "Yes, many things. He's been floorwalker in a department store for twenty-seven years."

Potter—You have heard of Diogenes going about with a lantern, searching for an honest man? Mrs. Potter—Bigger fool he! Honest men are not to be found on the street at night; they are at home with their families.

Floorwalker—Do you realize that you were four hours selling those two women a yard of ribbon? Saleslady—I know, sir. But just as they got to the counter they discovered that they each had a baby just learning to talk.

"Harry," asked the teacher of a rosy-faced lad, "can you tell me who George Washington was?" "Yes, ma'am," was the quick reply. "He was the first president of the country." "Quite right," replied the teacher. "And can you tell us what he was remarkable for?" "Yes, ma'am," replied the youngster. "He was remarkable because he told the truth."

It was James' first day at school. At noon he came running into the house, grabbed up the funny page of the Sunday newspaper, and looked at it excitedly. In a moment his face fell and he threw the paper down with the remark, "Gee, that's a rotten school. "Why, James?" asked his mother, astonished. "Well, I been there a whole half day and I ain't learned to read yet."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

WASTE WORTH \$10,000

For years a pile of waste from iridium, a material used in making diamond pointed fountain pens, was thought worthless by the Paul E. Wirt Fountain Pen Company, with factories at Bloomsburg, Pa. Recently a stranger dropped in on Mr. Wirt and offered him \$75 a pound, or more than \$10,000 for it. It is used in the munitions industry.

AUSTRALIA SEIZES WHEAT.

W. A. Holman, the Premier of New South Wales, said that Australia has taken the whole wheat produce under governmental control. At present the country has 4,500,000 tons in excess of home needs and it will be shipped to England as soon as the transport problem is solved.

The movement of this produce, he added, promises to be expedited by the new efforts being made by Great Britain and the United States to make sea traffic less perilous.

WHAT LUMBER MEANS TO OREGON.

One-fourth of Oregon's almost 60,000,000 acres is covered with merchantable timber, half of it in Government forests. Oregon's share of the nation's timber resources is one-sixth, and is estimated to represent timber for \$6,000,000,000 worth of manufactured lumber. The lumber industries employ nearly half of the wage earners in the State; the annual wage budget is \$15,000,000 and the yearly outlay for equipment and supplies is \$9,000,000 more. Steps are being taken to protect this great State and national asset against destruction by fire, which in the last few years has caused a loss estimated at \$240,000,000.

AN UMBRELLA RAINCOAT

A little girl, Miss Martha Bachman, who lives in Chattanooga, Tenn., has evidently suffered the discomfort of wet stockings caused by the flapping of her just-so-long rain-cape against her legs on her way to school, as so many other little girls have done in days gone by. But Martha has an idea for eliminating such discomfort from future rainy days, says Popular Science.

Her idea is to attach a cape of oil-cloth or rubberized material to the rim of the umbrella with snap-fasteners, buttoning it down the front in ordinary rain-cape fashion. An isinglass window at about the level of the eyes would prevent the weather of such umbrella-cape from bumping into each other on the street, like pilotless ships. In this way books could be protected from the rain also and the hand holding the umbrella.

HOW SAVAGES PREPARE POISONED ARROWS

The savages of interior Africa have attained an extraordinary degree of skill in preparing poisons with which to make their arrow heads the dread of their enemies. Although they use a variety of substances in making the poisonous fluids, such as animal extracts, and products of decay, the most common source of the most violent poisons is found in several species of tropical plants, says Popular Science. One of these, the strophantus, is extensively employed by the tribes of West Africa. They boil the fruits of this plant in water for about twenty-four hours, frequently adding to the liquid heads of serpents, fainted blood and a mixture of dead frogs. When ready, they dip the heads of their arrows into the poisons, and then allow them to dry in the sun. They repeat this process every few months so as to retain as much of the deadly effect as possible. The action of these poisons is very violent, death resulting, with intense agony, in five or ten minutes.

HICKORIES FOLLOWING THE CHESTNUTS.

Many New Yorkers deplore the end of the chestnut picking jaunts which used to take little parties of five or six to spend the day in the woods north of Manhattan. Those who lived in the Riverside section and in Westchester could pick all the chestnuts they wanted in those days, but since then the chestnut trees have been all killed by a fungous disease. In speaking of the situation John F. Walsh, head gardener of the Bronx parks, said:

"We first notice the chestnut trees were dying off in University Park about ten years ago. After a thorough investigation by our men we could not make out the cause, so Dr. W. A. Murrill of the Bronx Botanical Gardens was called in, and he enlisted the co-operation of Dr. L. O. Howard of the Bureau of Entomology at Washington, D. C., and they finally came to the conclusion that when a tree was once attacked that was the end of the tree.

"The chestnut trees later began dying by the dozens in all the parks of this section, and we have cut down 30,000 of them in the last ten years. We were able to sell most of the trees for lumber. The chestnut tree in this section of the country is a thing of the past, so that chestnut picking is a lost enjoyment to the small boy of the city."

After the destruction of the chestnut trees the hickory trees began to be attacked by a pest which killed them rapidly. It is estimated that at least 20,000 hickories have been cut down in the parks in The Bronx and Westchester. The destruction of the chestnut and the hickory has now reached the Adirondacks.

SCIENTIFIC MIND READING.

Wonderful! Startling! Scientific! You hand a friend a handsome set of cards on which are printed the names of the 28 United States Presidents. Ask him to secretly select a name and hold the card to his forehead and think of the name. Like a flash comes the answer "Lincoln, Washington," or whatever name he is thinking of. The more you repeat it the more puzzling it becomes. With our outfit you can do it anywhere, any time, with anybody. Startle your friends. Do it at the next party or at your club and be the lion of the evening. This was invented by a famous magician. Price, with complete set of cards and full instructions, 12 cents, mailed, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



STEEL DISC GUN.

This gun has a powerful steel spring, which shoots a disc from 150 to 200 feet in the air. With each gun we send fifteen discs, containing different sayings, as "Kiss me, kiddo, nothing makes me sick." "My, you look good, let's get acquainted." "Put a damper on your jaw tackle." "I lub my yaller gal, but oh, you Chocolate Drops." "Say, old man, pay me them two bits," etc. Young folks are delighted with them. Each gun packed in a box with 15 discs. Price complete, 12 cents; 3 for 30 cents; 1 dozen, \$1; sent by parcel post, prepaid. Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

RUBBER SUCKER.



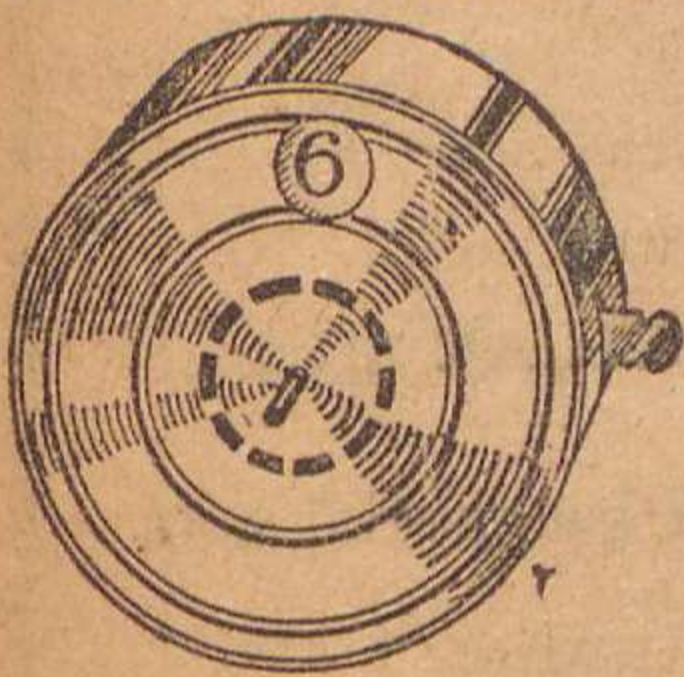
Rubber Vacuum Suckers

The latest novelty out! Dishes and plates will stick to the table, cups to the saucers like glue. Put one under a glass and then try to lift it. You can't. Lots of fun. Always put it on a smooth surface and wet the rubber. Many other tricks can be accomplished with this novelty. Price 12 cts. each by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

THE SPOTTER CARD TRICK.

The performer exhibits a die. The ace of spades and five cards are now taken from a pack. The ace of spades is thoroughly shuffled with the other cards, which are then placed down in a row on the table. The die is now thrown, and as if embodied with superhuman intelligence, the exact position of the Ace is indicated. Without touching the die, the performer picks up the cards, gives them a complete shuffle and again spreads them out. The die is rolled as before by any person, and is seen to come to a stop with the locating number uppermost. The card is turned over and found to correspond in position. Price, 15c. postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE AMUSEMENT WHEEL



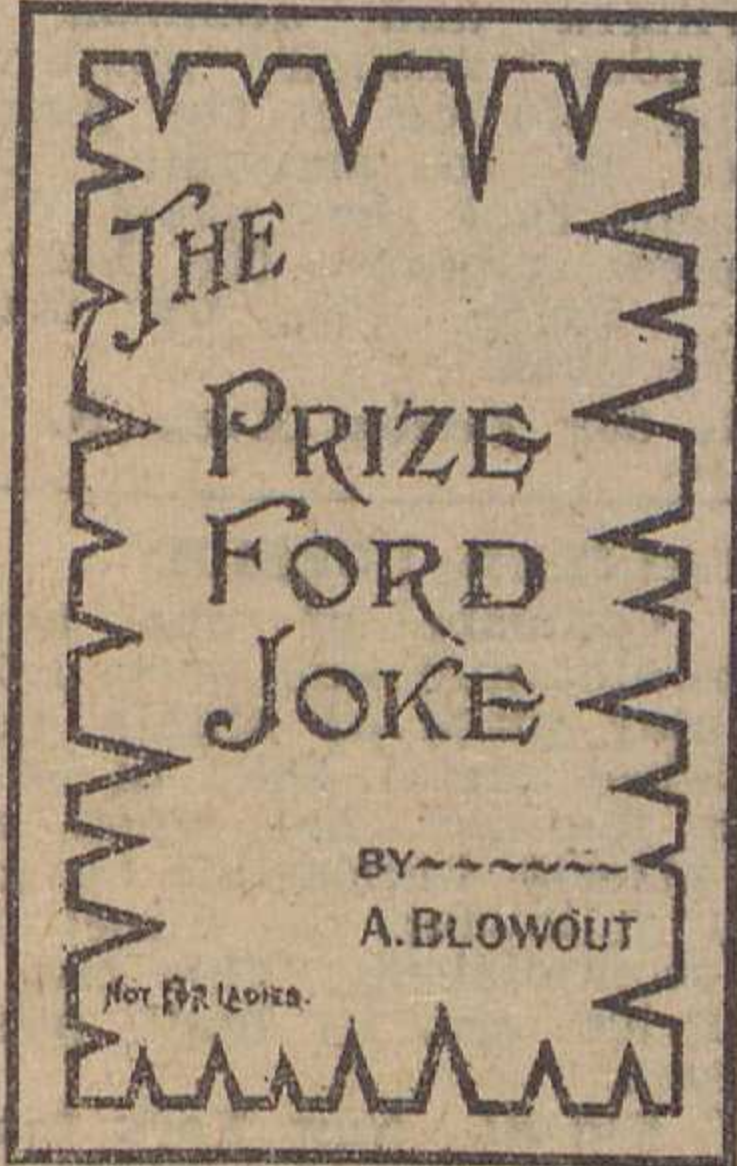
This handsome wheel, 7 3/4 inches in circumference, contains concealed numbers from 0 to 100. By spinning the wheel from the centerpost the numbers revolve rapidly, but only one appears at the circular opening when wheel stops spinning. It can be made to stop instantly by pressing the regulator at side. You can guess or bet on the number that will appear, the one getting the highest number winning. You might get 0, 5 or 100. Price, 15 cents; 3 for 40 cents, mailed, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

IMITATION CUT FINGER.

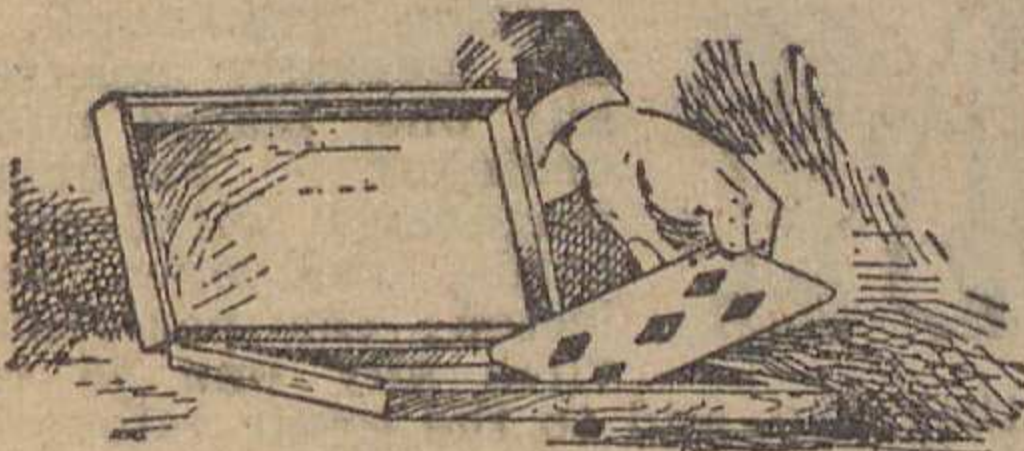


A cardboard finger, carefully bandaged with linen, and the side and end are blood-stained. When you slip it on your finger and show it to your friends, just give a groan or two, nurse it up, and pull a look of pain. You will get nothing but sympathy until you give them the laugh. Then duck! Price 10c. each, postpaid. Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE PRIZE FORD JOKE.



Looks like a story-book, but it contains a cap and a trigger. The moment your innocent friend opens the book to read the interesting story he expects—Pop! Bang! The explosion is harmless, but will make him think the Germans are after him. Price 35 cents each by mail, postpaid. Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.



MAGIC CARD BOX.—A very cleverly made box of exchanging or vanishing cards. In fact, any number of tricks of this character can be performed by it. A very necessary magical accessory. Price, 15c. FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

GOLD PLATED COMBINATION SET.

Gold plated combination set, with turquoise stone. Price 10c. each by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CACHOO AND ITCH POWDER.

As Itch powder, Cachoo and Bombs are unmailable, we cannot accept orders for less than One Dollar's worth of an assortment. They can be sent by express only, on which we will prepay the charges. WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

POCKET SAVINGS BANK.

A perfect little bank, handsomely nickel plated. Holds just five dollars (50 dimes). It cannot be opened until the bank is full, when it can be readily emptied and relocked, ready to be again refilled. Every parent should see that their children have a small savings bank, as the early habit of saving their dimes is of the greatest importance. Habits formed in early life are seldom forgotten in later years. Price of this little bank, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

AUTOMATIC COPYING PENCIL.



The importance of carrying a good reliable pencil need not be dwelt upon here. It is an absolute necessity with us all. The holder of this pencil is beautifully nickel plated with grooved box-wood handle, giving a firm grip in writing; the pencil automatically supplies the lead as needed while a box of these long leads are given with each pencil. The writing of this pencil is indelible the same as ink, and thus can be used in writing letters, addressing envelopes, etc. Bills of account or invoices made out with this pencil can be copied the same as if copying ink was used. It is the handiest pencil on the market; you do not require a knife to keep it sharp; it is ever ready, ever safe, and just the thing to carry. Price of pencil, with box of leads complete, only 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen 90c. postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

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To the Wife of One Who Drink

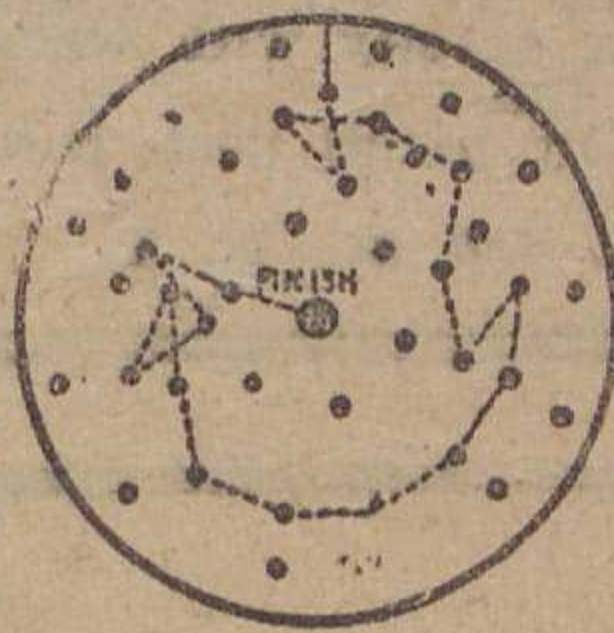
I have an important confidential message for you. It will come in a plain envelope. How to conquer the liquor habit in 3 days and make home happy. Wonderful, safe, lasting, reliable, inexpensive method, guaranteed. Write to Edw. J. Woods, C 228, Station E, New York, N. Y. Show this to others.

THE ELK HEAD PUZZLE.



Just out and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone. Made of silvered metal. Price 12c.; 3 for 30c., sent by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

THE SPIDER WEB PUZZLE.



A very interesting little puzzle. It consists of a heavily nickeled plate and brass ring. The object is to get the ring from the side to the center and back. This is very hard, but we give directions making it easy. Price, 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid. FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

LAUGHABLE EGG TRICK.



This is the funniest trick ever exhibited and always produces roars of laughter. The performer says to the audience that he requires some eggs for one of his experiments. As no spectator carries any, he calls his assistant, taps him on top of the head, he gags, and an egg comes out of his mouth. This is repeated until six eggs are produced. It is an easy trick to perform, once you know how, and always makes a hit. Directions given for working it. Price, 25 cents by mail, postpaid. Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.



"KNOCK-OUT" CARD TRICK.—Five cards are shown, front and back, and there are no two cards alike. You place some of them in a handkerchief and ask any person to hold them by the corners in full view of the audience. You now take the remaining cards and request anyone to name any card shown. This done, you repeat the name of the card and state that you will cause it to invisibly leave your hand and pass into the handkerchief, where it will be found among the other cards. At the word "Go!" you show that the chosen card has vanished, leaving absolutely only two cards. The handkerchief is unfolded by any person, and in it is found the identical card. Recommended very highly. Price 10c. each by mail, postpaid. Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

IMITATION GIANT DIAMONDS.



Diamond rings or studs of half-inch and one inch in diameter are heard of in stories only. We have them imitated by prodigious sparkling stones which will deceive the glance of any spectator. Price, by mail, postpaid, small size, 25c each; large size, 35c each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE CREEPING MOUSE.

This is the latest novelty out. The mouse is of a very natural appearance. When placed upon a mirror, wall, window or any other smooth surface, it will creep slowly downward without leaving the perpendicular surface. It is furnished with an adhesive gum-roll underneath which makes it stick. Very amusing to both young and old. Price, ten cents by mail.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

ELECTRIC CIGAR CASE.

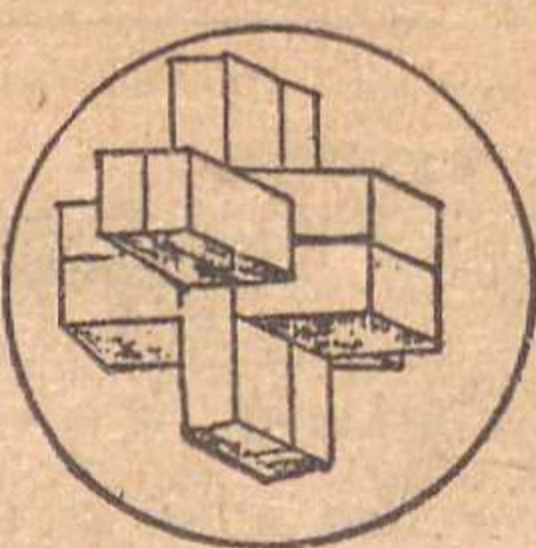


This handsome cigar case appears to be filled with fine cigars. If your friend smokes ask him to have a cigar with you. As he reaches out for one the cigars, like a flash, instantly disappear into the case entirely out of sight, greatly to his surprise and astonishment. You can beg his pardon and state you thought there were some cigars left in the case. A slight pressure on sides of case causes the cigars to disappear as if by magic. By touching a wire at bottom of case the cigars instantly appear again in their proper position in the case. As real tobacco is used they are sure to deceive any one. It is one of the best practical jokes of the season. A novelty with which you can have lots of fun.

Price 35 cents, sent by parcel post, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., N. Y.

MIKADO BLOCK PUZZLE.



Imported from Japan. This neat little puzzle consists of six strangely cut pieces of white wood unassembled. The trick is to so assemble the blocks as to form a six-point cross. Price 12c, by mail, postpaid.

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WILLARD-JOHNSON PRIZE-FIGHT PUZZLE.



Four strips of cardboard, each three inches by one and a half inches, showing Willard and Johnson in various absurd postures. The solution in the puzzle lies in so arranging the strips that they show Willard in the complete picture, the heavy-weight champion. Price, 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE TANTALIZER PUZZLE.



Consists of one horizontal and one perpendicular piece of highly polished metal bent in such a manner that when assembled it seems utterly impossible to get them apart, but by following the directions it is very easily accomplished. This one is a brain twister. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

PHANTOM CARDS.



From five cards three are mentally selected by any one, placed under an ordinary handkerchief, performer withdraws two cards, the ones not selected; the performer invites any one to remove the other two, and to the great astonishment of all they have actually disappeared. No sleight-of-hand. Recommended as the most ingenious card trick ever invented. Price 10c, by mail.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

TWO-CARD MONTE.



This famous trick gets them all. You pick up a card and when you look at it you find you haven't got the card you thought you had.

Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

PAPEL BLANCO.

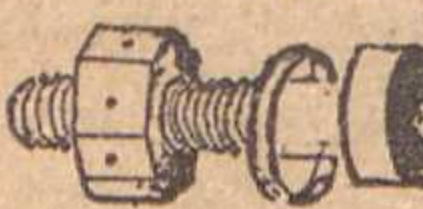


Four cards are placed in a hat. One card is removed and the balance are now shown to be changed to blank cards. The cards can be thoroughly examined.

Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

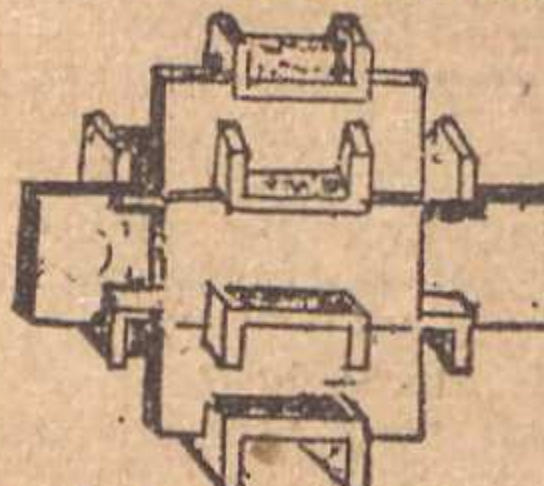
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A very ingenious puzzle, consisting of a nut and bolt with a ring fastened on the shank, which cannot be removed unless the nut is removed. The question is how to remove the nut. Price, 15c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

JAPANESE BANK PUZZLE.



Built up of a large number of grooved pieces of wood. Very difficult to take apart, and very difficult to put together. It can be so dissected as to make a bank of it and when re-assembled would defy the most ingenious bank burglar outside of prison. Price 35c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE WAR FOUNTAIN PEN.



A very handsome fountain pen case to which is attached a pocket holder neatly made of metal and highly nickel-plated. When your friend desires the use of your pen and gets it, he is very much astonished when he removes the cap by the sudden and loud noise of the explosion that occurs, and yet a little paper cap does it all. Price, 35c, by mail, postpaid.

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